A0610 1

POPQAE 43(3) 285–442 (1979)
ISSN 0033-362X

Public Opinion Quarterly

Creating a Crisis: German Mass Media and Oil Supply in 1973–74
Hans Mathias Kepplinger and Herbert Roth

Why Is Turnout Down? *Howard L. Reiter*

Certain Problems in Election Survey Methodology *Paul Perry*

Learning About the Candidates: The 1976 Presidential Debates
Arthur H. Miller and Michael MacKuen

The "Positivity Bias" in Evaluations of Public Figures: Evidence Against Instrument Artifacts
Richard R. Lau, David O. Sears and Richard Centers

Response Validity in Surveys of Voting Behavior
Michael W. Traugott and John P. Katosh

The Consequences of Large Monetary Incentives in Mail Surveys of Elites
R. Kenneth Godwin

THE POLLS: Terrorism and Hijacking *Connie de Boer*

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

CURRENT RESEARCH • COMMENTS AND LETTERS
BOOK REVIEWS

FALL 1979

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

The Public Opinion Quarterly

ORGAN OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH
EDITORIALLY SPONSORED BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION
ALLEN BARTON W. PHILLIPS DAVISON HARVEY C. MANSFIELD
ROBERT K. MERTON FREDERICK T. C. YU

Editor: ELEANOR SINGER
Department Editors:
PHILIP A. HARDING, *News and Notes*
MARC B. GLASSMAN, *Book Reviews*
Managing Editor: INA C. JAEGER
Editorial Assistants:
LAURA VALENSTEIN
NANCY JALET

EDITORIAL BOARD

LEO BOGART
STEVEN R. BROWN
ROBERT O. CARLSON
STEVEN H. CHAFFEE
STEVEN M. COHEN
PHILIP E. CONVERSE
JAMES A. DAVIS
MARTIN R. FRANKEL
HERBERT J. GANS
NORVAL D. GLENN
JOHN HAMMOND
EUGENE L. HARTLEY
MATHEW HAUCK
HERBERT H. HYMAN
ELIHU KATZ
JOSEPH T. KLAPPER
HERBERT E. KRUGMAN
EVERETT LADD
KENNETH C. LAND
GLADYS ENGEL LANG
NATHAN MACCOBY
HERBERT MCCLOSKY
WILLIAM J. MCGUIRE
JOHN P. ROBINSON
HOWARD SCHUMAN
SEYMOUR SUDMAN
CAROL H. WEISS
CHARLES R. WRIGHT

JUNE CHRIST, *AAPOR Representative*

Volume #43, 4 issues (1979)

© 1979 The Trustees of Columbia University. Published quarterly by Elsevier North Holland, Inc. New York. Second-class postage paid at New York, New York and at additional mailing offices. Institutional subscription price per year $25.00 (Volume #43, 1979). Individual subscription for subscriber's own personal use $13.00 (payment must accompany order). Foreign subscribers must add an additional $4.00 per volume for postage (surface mail) and handling, $10.00 for Air Mail to Europe and Canada, $16.00 for Air Mail outside the U.S., Canada, or Europe.

Mail orders and direct subscription information to:
Michael Torzewski
Subscription Department
Elsevier North Holland, Inc.
52 Vanderbilt Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Single copy and back volume information furnished upon written request. Claims for missing issues can be honored only up to three months from date of issue. Indexed by Public Affairs Information Services, Social Sciences Index, United States Political Science Documents, and Combined Retrospective Index Sets (CRIS).

PUBLICATION NUMBER 449380

Editorial Office: Journalism Building, Columbia University 116th Street and Broadway, New York, New York 10027
Business, Subscriptions, Back Issues: Elsevier North Holland, Inc. 52 Vanderbilt Avenue New York, New York 10017
AAPOR: Post Office Box 17, Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Subscribers and members of AAPOR are urged to notify the Subscription Office as soon as possible of changes of address. In doing so, give the old as well as the new address.

PUBLISHED BY ELSEVIER NORTH HOLLAND, INC.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

The Public Opinion Quarterly

VOLUME 43 FALL 1979 NUMBER 3

Creating a Crisis: German Mass Media and Oil Supply in 1973–74 *Hans Mathias Kepplinger and Herbert Roth* 285

Why Is Turnout Down? *Howard L. Reiter* 297

Certain Problems in Election Survey Methodology *Paul Perry* 312

Learning About the Candidates: The 1976 Presidential Debates *Arthur H. Miller and Michael MacKuen* 326

The "Positivity Bias" in Evaluations of Public Figures: Evidence Against Instrument Artifacts *Richard R. Lau, David O. Sears and Richard Centers* 347

Response Validity in Surveys of Voting Behavior *Michael W. Traugott and John P. Katosh* 359

The Consequences of Large Monetary Incentives in Mail Surveys of Elites *R. Kenneth Godwin* 378

CURRENT RESEARCH

The Effects of Newspaper Endorsements on Election Outcomes: A Case Study *Howard A. Scarrow with Steve Borman* 388

The Effect on Voters of Misleading, Confusing, and Difficult Ballot Titles *Roger Gafke and David Leuthold* 394

On the Selective Nature of Bias *Dhirendra N. Ghosh* 402

COMMENTS AND LETTERS 405

THE POLLS: Terrorism and Hijacking *Connie de Boer* 410

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH 419

BOOK REVIEWS

Daniel Lerner and Lyle M. Nelson, eds., *Communication Research—A Half-Century Appraisal* *Herbert H. Hyman* 435

William Adams and Fay Schreibman, eds., *Television Network News: Issues in Content Research* *Garrett J. O'Keefe* 437

John A. Sonquist and William C. Dunkelberg, *Survey and Opinion Research: Procedures for Processing and Analysis* *Paul A. Scipione* 438

Donald L. Shaw and Maxwell E. McCombs, *The Emergence of American Political Issues: The Agenda-Setting Function of the Press* *Peter Clarke* 439

Robert T. Bower and Priscilla de Gasparis, *Ethics in Social Research: Protecting the Interest of Human Subjects* *Eleanor Singer* 440

Albert J. Menendez, *Religion at the Polls* *Ronald C. Green* 441

◆

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

Authors should submit three copies of their articles, including a short abstract, and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope if they wish them returned. Bibliographic references, footnotes, and tables should be typed to conform to the printed style of this journal. Authors are urged to consult recent issues before submitting articles.

Upon acceptance of an article by the journal, the author(s) will be asked to transfer copyright in the article to the publisher. This transfer will insure the widest possible dissemination of information under the U.S. Copyright Law.

The PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY is hospitable to all points of view, provided that the material presented will help to illuminate problems of communication and public opinion. The American Association for Public Opinion Research assumes responsibility only for material signed by an officer of the Association in his official capacity. Statements of fact and opinion are made on the responsibility of the authors alone and do not represent the views of the editors.

The PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY has been registered with the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc. Consent is given for copying of articles for personal or internal use, or for the personal or internal use of specific clients. This consent is given on the condition that the copier pay through the Center the per-copy fee stated in the code on the first page of each article for copying beyond that permitted by the U.S. Copyright Law. If no code appears on an article, the author has not given broad consent to copy and permission to copy must be obtained directly from the author. All articles published prior to 1978 may be copied for a per-copy fee of $1.00, also payable through the Center. This consent does not extend to other kinds of copying, such as for general distribution, resale, advertising and promotional purposes, or for creating new collective works.

Why Is Turnout Down?

HOWARD L. REITER

ONE of the most significant trends in American politics in the past couple of decades has been the decline in the proportion of the eligible electorate who actually vote. According to the Bureau of the Census, the turnout in presidential elections has declined each year since 1960, from 62.8 percent in 1960 to 54.4 percent in 1976 (Statistical Abstract, 1977:508). This marks the longest period of monotonic decline in turnout in American history (Congressional Record, 1970:41223-24). A nation long noted for a low rate of turnout, compared with other highly industrialized competitive polities, may soon see more than half of its eligible voters staying home on election day. Commentators have suggested a variety of causal factors—voter alienation due to Vietnam and Watergate, the eighteen-year-old vote, and registration requirements—and have predicted dire consequences for the stability and vigor of American politics. In Congress, legislation has been pending to ease registration requirements and, its sponsors hope, increase the size of the electorate.

It is our present purpose to ascertain some of the factors associated

---

Abstract The monotonic decline in turnout in presidential elections since 1960 is the subject of this analysis of survey data. After some common explanations for this decline were rejected, it was discovered that the decline occurred mainly among low-income and low-education whites. Two explanatory hypotheses were examined, but appropriate data for testing them were unavailable; however, in the 1970s nonvoters were more likely than voters at all income levels to express dissatisfaction with the political system. Nonvoting whites are not always a Democratic group, and their voting behavior is unpredictable over time. Their failure to vote may have an especially significant impact on Democratic party policies, and implies that palliatives like reform of voter registration laws may not have the desired effect.

Howard Reiter is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Connecticut at Storrs. Financial assistance was provided by the University of Connecticut Research Foundation, and technical assistance was provided by the staff of the Social Science Data Center and the Roper Center of the University of Connecticut. The author is indebted to his colleagues, Fred Kort and Everett Carll Ladd, Jr., for their advice. Anonymous referees were also helpful.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1979 by The Trustees of Columbia University
Published by Elsevier North-Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/79/0043-297/$1.75

with this decline, and to speculate on possible causes and effects. We should expect no simple answers, and in this relatively brief essay we will present some initial findings that demand further analysis at greater length. Because some of the variables we will investigate are not accessible in aggregate form, we are using the surveys conducted by the Survey Research Center of the Center for Political Studies of the University of Michigan.[1] SRC/CPS turnout is well above that reported by the Census Bureau's aggregate data, but the trend over time is parallel to the aggregate data trend, and as we examine groups in the population we must assume that the degree of overreporting is comparable among all of them.

The political participation literature is filled with factors associated with high or low turnout. Some are demographic: nonvoters include disproportionate numbers of nonwhites, women, Protestants, southerners, the young and the old, rural dwellers, those of low education, income, and occupational status, and workers who do not belong to labor unions. Psychological factors come into play, too, as nonvoters are said to be disproportionately low in their sense of political efficacy, personal competence, political involvement (including media usage), and trust in government. Political factors associated with nonvoting include nonpartisanship, weak preference for one candidate over the other, and expectation of a landslide in which one's vote is especially unlikely to make a difference (Lane, 1959:46–52; Milbrath, 1965:58–62). We will examine all these factors[2] except for registration requirements, because the SRC/CPS sample does not represent all states. For reasons to be discussed below, such laws probably did not affect the decline in turnout, and the most careful study that we have of the effects of these registration laws produces conclusions not far from our own (Rosenstone and Wolfinger, 1978:22–45).

The first observation to be made is that blacks were not part of this trend, as Figure 1 demonstrates. The dramatic rise in the turnout of Southern blacks from 1960 to 1968 was clearly the result of deliberate political mobilization and the destruction of the many barriers to the franchise, but even in the North, black turnout held fairly steady. As we have reported elsewhere, the period under scrutiny was one in which blacks became much more interested in campaigns than they had been earlier (Reiter, 1975). Whites in both regions experienced roughly parallel declines, with a rise only in the turnout of southern

---

[1] The data were made available by the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research, and neither the SRC/CPS nor the ICPR bears any responsibility for the present analysis or interpretation.

[2] Limitations of space preclude discussion of our operationalization of these variables, but the author will be happy to respond to queries about it.

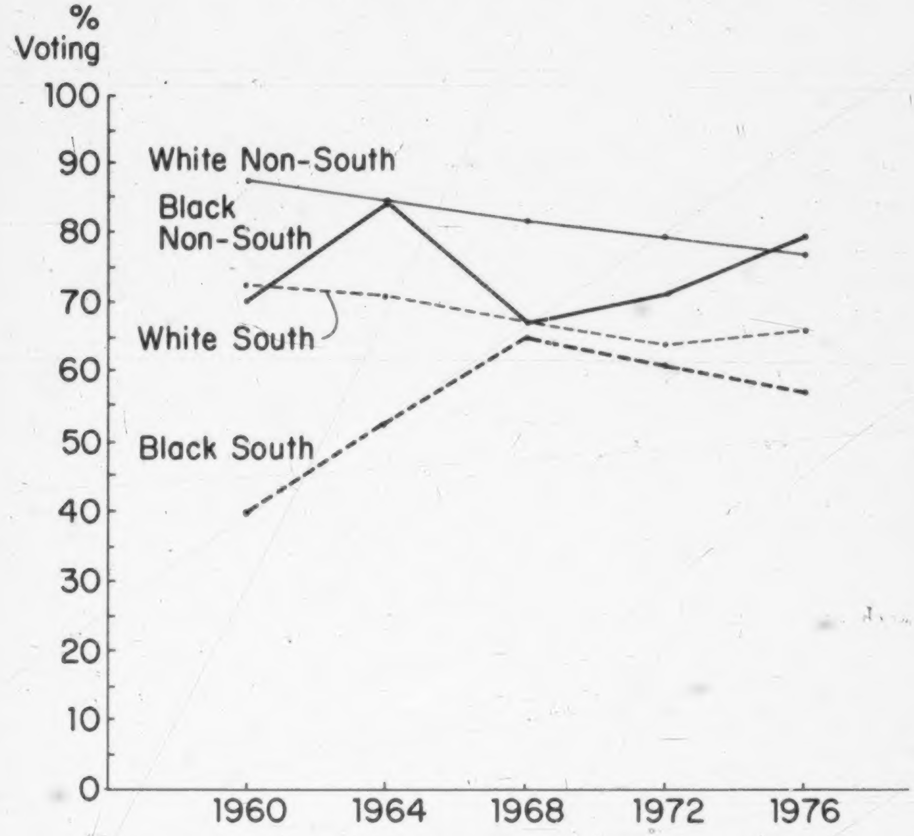

Figure 1. Turnout of Whites and Blacks by Region, 1960–1976

whites in 1976, perhaps due to Carter's candidacy. Because of these striking racial differences, nonwhites will be excluded from further analysis.

Some Blind Alleys

A few of the more popular hypotheses can be dismissed quite readily. Watergate could not have been a factor in most of the elections under analysis, and does not even seem to have been an important influence in 1972 (much to McGovern's dismay). Even the decline from 1972 to 1976 was not unusually steep. The eighteen-year-old vote was similarly too recent a development, and we shall demonstrate that the turnout of older voters also declined. In fact, only the decline from 1968 to 1972 can be attributed in part to this development. Strict registration requirements were not a significant factor, as they were relaxed during the period. The *Book of the States* reveals that while 22 states had literacy tests or poll taxes in 1960, none did so by 1972; and while 32 states allowed permanent registration in all areas in 1960, 41 did so by 1972. Yet the turnout declined anyway.

The only popular hypothesis that appears to have some plausibility is the impact of the Vietnam war. Those whites who saw the war as an important problem declined in turnout more than those who did not; and of those whites for whom the war was salient, those critical of our involvement experienced a greater decline in turnout than those who thought it was not a mistake. But an explanation based primarily on Vietnam fails to account for the low turnout of 1976, by which time Vietnam was no longer an American preoccupation. Of course, Vietnam and Watergate may have had an indirect effect by lowering trust in government and political efficacy, factors we will examine below.

In several ways, the drop in turnout is truly paradoxical, because it occurred despite the increase in the American population of median education level, white-collar jobs, and real income. Moreover, whites in the SRC/CPS sample had increasing proportions of middle-class self-identifiers, Roman Catholics, and those citing many reasons for preferring one candidate and his party over the other—again, all high-turnout groups. But just as the size of these high-turnout groups increased, so did the size of some low-turnout groups in the sample—women, independents, the young and the old, those predicting a landslide, and those low on media usage, political efficacy, political involvement, personal effectiveness, and trust in government. One might hypothesize that the drop in turnout occurred merely because of the change in size of one or more of these groups.

Take age as an example. Because of the maturation of the post-World War II babies and the adoption of the Twenty-sixth Amendment, the percentage of voters under thirty years of age rose from 13.5 percent of the white sample in 1960 to 27.7 percent of the 1976 sample; and presumably because of differences in the size of age cohorts and a declining death rate, the percentage of voters seventy years of age and older rose from 9.6 percent in 1960 to 11.1 percent in 1976. Was the drop in turnout due simply to the increase in size of these low-turnout age groups? Figure 2 shows that turnout dropped noticeably among middle-aged whites, so that even controlling for the size of the age groups, the overall white turnout would have declined.[3] If both the demographic makeup and the turnout rates shifted

---

[3] Moreover, when the population is divided into four-year age groups, nearly every group experiences a decline in turnout by the early 1970s, compared to its counterpart

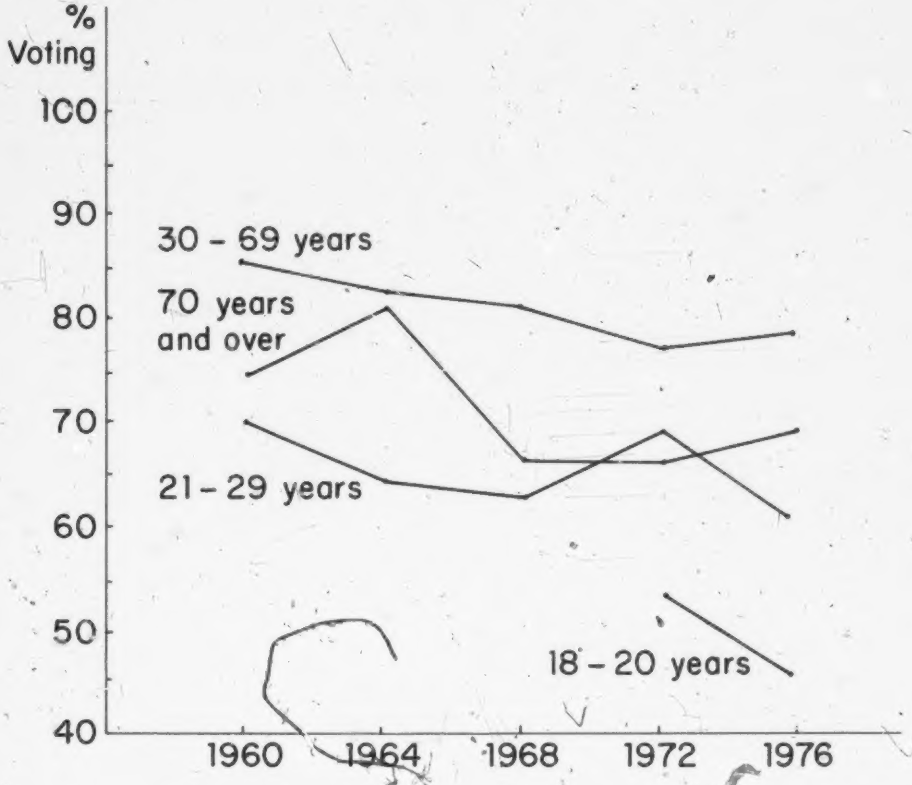

Figure 2. Turnout of Whites by Age, 1960–1976

in the direction of lower overall turnout rates, which factor was more important? In other words, was the overall drop in turnout more attributable to the increase in the proportion of young and old voters, or to the turnout declines within the age groups? Excluding voters under twenty-one, the 1976 turnout rate was 73.9 percent. Had the size of the other age groups remained at their 1960 levels, but their turnout rates dropped to their 1976 levels, the overall result in 1976 would have been a turnout of 75.7 percent. On the other hand, had each group maintained its 1960 turnout rate but expanded or contracted its size to 1976 levels, the overall turnout in 1976 would have been 80.4 percent. Since the result of controlling for size more closely approximated the actual result than did the result of controlling for turnout rate, the overall decline in turnout is probably more attributa-

---

in the early 1960s. As a result, only the decline in turnout from 1972 to 1976 can be attributed solely to the maturation of young adults.

ble to the turnout drop within each age group than to longitudinal changes in the age distribution.

We performed a similar analysis of partisanship, sex, expectation of closeness of outcome, media usage, political efficacy, political involvement, personal effectiveness, and trust in government. In all cases the result was the same. The decline in turnout could not be explained merely by the increase in size of a particular low-turnout group. Something else was happening.

The Highest Correlates

In any given year, a variety of independent variables are correlated with the decision whether or not to vote. These simple correlations would be sufficient to examine were it not for the fact that some are intercorrelated: people with high levels of education, for example, also tend to be middle-class self-identifiers, and people of high income tend to rank high on political efficacy. In order to determine what the most important correlates of turnout are, we need a method that will enable us to control for other variables. Such a multivariate technique will then reveal which variables became increasingly correlated with turnout from 1960 to 1976.

Our method is determined in part by the fact that our dependent variable is dichotomous—voters and nonvoters. Because of its limited assumptions about the distribution of the values of the variables, we are using discriminant analysis. This method produces standardized discriminant function coefficients which are statistically analogous to the standardized coefficients produced by multiple regression analysis. The higher the absolute value of the coefficient, the higher the correlation between the independent variable and the decision whether to vote, relative to the other independent variables (Kort, 1973; Nie et al., 1975:434–67). For all years, we coded the independent variables in such a way that the higher the value, the more likely was the individual to vote, according to the literature on nonvoting. The signs in Table 1 indicate whether the groups in parentheses had higher turnout (positive sign) or lower turnout (negative sign). For example, in Table 1, in 1960 education has a positive sign because the highly educated were more likely to vote than the less educated, even when other variables were controlled for. But note the negative sign for income in 1960; when other variables were held constant, low-income whites were *more* likely to vote than high-income whites.[4]

---

[4] We used the direct method in which all independent variables are entered into the analysis concurrently. This was done in order to insure that all variables would appear

Table 1. Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficients for Whites, with Turnout as the Dependent Variable, 1960–1976[a]

	1960	*1964*	*1968*	*1972*	*1976*	*Slope*
Family income (High)	−.128	+.057	+.146	+.158	+.096	+.055
Education (High)	+.221	+.112	+.220	+.388	+.235	+.030
Political efficacy (High)	+.224	−.142	+.215	+.061	+.220	+.020
Personal effectiveness (High)	−.019	+.136	+.021	+.064	+.110	+.019
Partisanship (Strong)	+.186	+.249	+.206	+.296	+.242	+.016
Media usage (High)	+.063	+.216	+.223	+.174	+.143	+.012
Urban-rural locale (Urban)	+.081	−.082	−.021	−.100	+.005	+.003
Political involvement (High)	+.358	+.467	+.385	+.421	+.380	−.0002
Religion[b] (Non-Protestants)	+.034	+.038	+.039	+.173	−.055	−.004
Sex[b] (Males)	+.149	+.067	−.043	+.048	+.103	−.011
Closeness of race (Close)	+.182	−.024	+.0005	+.007	+.073	−.019
Candidate preference (Strong)	+.129	+.070	+.070	−.026	+.058	−.024
Age[b] (30 and over)	+.285	+.350	+.329	+.047	+.288	−.030
Region[b] (Non-South)	+.258	+.370	+.226	+.245	+.172	−.030
White-collar[b] (Family head)	+.345	+.287	+.144	+.157	+.169	−.048
Class identification (Middle)	+.183	+.176	−.017	−.109	+.014	−.062
Blue-collar, service[b] (No family head)	+.231	+.253	+.059	−.170	+.083	−.072
Farmer[b] (No family head)	+.388	+.220	+.095	−.113	+.077	−.096
Trust in government (High)	—	+.143	−.032	+.062	−.045	—
Canonical correlation	.458	.426	.451	.456	.446	
Wilks' Lambda	.790	.819	.797	.792	.801	
Significance of Lambda	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
% of cases correctly classified	76.3	72.6	72.4	72.1	71.3	

[a] The group associated with the positive sign for each variable appears in parentheses.
[b] Dummy variable.

in all years, and therefore a trend could be observed for each of them. In this part of our analysis, we did not separate middle-aged from elderly voters, as the most careful study known to us (Wolfinger and Rosenstone: 1977) indicates that there is no dropoff in turnout among the elderly when other variables are controlled for.

Table 1 reveals that political involvement ranked highest as a correlate of turnout in nearly all years. This is not surprising, for that variable is based on how much interest the respondent had in the campaign, and how much the respondent cared about who would win. Perhaps no other variable comes closer to the heart of the decision whether or not to vote.

However, our most pressing concern is the trend over time, and for that purpose we computed the slope of the longitudinal regression line of each variable's coefficient. The unit of time is the four-year period. For example, the coefficient for income rose about .055 every four years. (Because there was no trust-in-government variable in 1960, we computed no slope for it.) Computing regression slopes may seem to be overanalyzing the data, but we felt compelled to offer the reader some simple measure to discern trends among this plethora of numbers.

The highest overall increases were for income and education. In other words, we have been experiencing since 1960 increasing differences between white voters and nonvoters on those class dimensions. It should quickly be added, however, that class self-identification and occupation showed the largest *declines* in coefficients. So when we use the term "class" we are referring only to income and education. In this sense, the decline in turnout since 1960 has not been occurring among all social groups equally; *poor and less educated whites have been dropping out of the electorate at greater rates than wealthy and highly educated whites.* To illustrate this more directly, Table 2 shows the turnout rates of major income and educational groups among the white population. Note how little the turnout rates of the high status groups fell, and how much did the rates of the low status groups.

The skeptical reader may wonder whether this increasingly upper-class profile of the electorate might simply be the result of an increase

Table 2. Turnout of Whites by Income and Education, 1960–1976, Percent Voting

	1960	*1964*	*1968*	*1972*	*1976*
Family income					
Highest quartile	89.5%	87.7%	89.1%	89.0%	86.0%
Second highest quartile	83.4	82.0	83.3	77.5	73.5
Second lowest quartile	81.6	77.5	76.2	66.9	70.5
Lowest quartile	71.3	72.2	63.2	60.7	57.3
Education					
At least some college	91.1	88.0	84.8	87.0	85.6
High school graduate only	90.0	82.6	84.3	75.9	71.2
9–11 years	73.2	74.6	71.0	61.2	56.3
0–8 years	72.2	71.8	59.8	59.4	61.1

in the proportion of the elderly, who are less educated and earn lower incomes than younger voters, and also vote less. We performed another discriminant analysis, controlling for age by looking only at those aged thirty to sixty-nine, and again the coefficient for income rose the most. We also controlled for level of political involvement, the strongest correlate with turnout, and again low-status groups declined most in turnout. Our finding is apparently not an artifact of other trends.[5]

Possible Explanations

Why have lower-status whites been dropping out of the electorate at a faster rate than higher-status whites? One answer might be the one provided by E. E. Schattschneider, who wrote, "If the political system is dominated by the cleavage AB, what can the people who want another alignment (CD) do? One thing they may do is to stop voting" (Schattschneider, 1960:105). This is an extremely difficult question to study, for no survey familiar to the author attempts to ascertain whether the respondent is satisfied with the cleavage structure of the party system, nor is it easy to conceive of a question which would convey this in terms easily understood by most people.

A more radical proposition has been suggested by W. D. Burnham, who argues that the absence of a "viable socialist movement" has deprived working and lower-class people of a party to represent their interests and mobilize their electoral potential; hence lower turnout among these groups (Burnham, 1967:301). This would be consistent with cross-national data showing that the correlation between political participation and socioeconomic status is lower in nations with competitive socialist parties (Verba, 1972:208–10, 339–41). Again, operationalization is difficult, for the American political culture is so antisocialist that there is little evidence of yearning for socialism even among its logical constituency.

A few survey questions that only roughly approximate legitimate tests of the Schattschneider and Burnham hypotheses are at best suggestive of an answer. When asked which issues are salient to them, are nonvoters more likely than voters to cite issues that do not lie along the existing party cleavage? If so, then Schattschneider may have been right. We examined responses to open-ended questions asking what the most important problems facing the government were, and found few differences between voters and nonvoters. The only category which nonvoters almost consistently were more likely to cite than voters was race and public order. Only in 1964 and 1972 was the difference statistically significant at the .05 level by the chi-square test; yet those were years in which the major-party presidential candidates probably differed *more* on racial issues than during some other years. So this admittedly imperfect gauge does not confirm the hypothesis.

---

[5] In order to test for the effects of collinearity, we ran the data without the class and occupation variables, with virtually the same results.

The most frequently cited alternative to the present party cleavage structure is one in which one party would be liberal and the other conservative. The AIPO (Gallup) survey has asked whether people would prefer such a system, but only in the off-year election of 1974 was the question asked simultaneously with an election.[6] We found that for low-income whites, advocacy of change was correlated with low turnout, but among high-income whites, the ideologues voted at a greater rate than those satisfied with the status quo. For low-income voters, then, our findings suggest possible confirmation of Schattschneider's hypothesis, but the absence of data from other years does not allow us to ascertain what impact these attitudes had on turnout over time.

A question with some possible bearing on Burnham's argument is whether a change in our form of government is desirable, which was asked in the SRC/CPS survey in 1972 and 1976. We recognize that the question is not related to the economic meaning of "socialism." Expecting that nonvoters will be more likely than voters to advocate change, we find that this was true in both years, even when income was held constant. But the absence of earlier data again handicaps our ability to analyze these attitudes longitudinally.

We leave these hypotheses neither confirmed nor refuted, because of the lack of appropriate data.

Effects on Parties and Candidates

We might expect that one of the immediate effects of an increasingly wealthy and highly educated white electorate would be an electorate that is increasingly more Republican than white nonvoters. For each year, we examined the partisan self-identification of white voters and nonvoters, and for each year through 1968, we looked at their presidential preferences. In 1972 and 1976, the SRC/CPS instrument included no question about the presidential preference of nonvoters, although we will note the results of a CBS News/*New York Times* survey in 1976. Except for George Wallace in 1968, all minor candidates have been excluded from the behavioral part of the analysis.

---

[6] The survey was AIPO #918-K (November 5, 1974), obtained from the Roper Center at the University of Connecticut.

The results appear in Tables 3 and 4, and they do not confirm our hypothesis.

Table 3 shows that in most years, Democrats were slightly over-represented among voters, and in all years, independents were under-represented and Republicans substantially overrepresented. So nonvoters, as we might expect, were more independent than voters; those nonvoters with a partisan preference were considerably more likely to be Democrats than Republicans, especially when compared to voters. The latter phenomenon might be attributed to nonvoters' lower-class background. In fact, when income was controlled, differences between voters and nonvoters on the ratio of Democrats to Republicans tended to decrease, although this was not always the case in each income quartile.

Table 3. Partisan Self-Identification of Whites, by Whether One Voted, 1960–1976

	Voters	*Nonvoters*	*Difference*
1960			
Democratic	44.5%	47.4%	−2.9
Independent	21.3	25.3	−4.0
Republican	33.5	18.8	+14.7
Other	0.7	8.5	−7.8
Total	100.0	100.0	
N	(1,343)	(293)	
1964			
Democratic	50.7	48.0	+2.7
Independent	20.4	27.9	−7.5
Republican	28.7	20.1	+8.6
Other	0.2	4.0	−3.8
Total	100.0	100.0	
N	(943)	(348)	
1968			
Democratic	40.7	38.4	+2.3
Independent	29.5	36.3	−6.8
Republican	29.5	20.4	+9.1
Other	0.3	4.9	−4.6
Total	100.0	100.0	
N	(956)	(284)	
1972			
Democratic	37.0	35.2	+1.8
Independent	31.8	44.4	−12.6
Republican	30.5	16.7	+13.8
Other	0.7	3.8	−3.1
Total	100.0	100.1	
N	(1,500)	(532)	
1976			
Democratic	35.2	32.8	+2.4
Independent	34.3	45.6	−11.3
Republican	29.9	18.1	+11.8
Other	0.6	3.5	−2.9
Total	100.0	100.0	
N	(1,532)	(580)	

Table 4. Presidential Preference of Whites, by Whether One Voted, 1960–1968

	Voters	*Nonvoters*	*Difference*
1960			
Kennedy (D)	47.9%	43.3%	+4.6
Nixon (R)	52.1	56.7	−4.6
Total	100.0	100.0	
N	1,325	275	
1964			
Johnson (D)	66.1	67.6	−1.5
Goldwater (R)	33.9	32.4	+1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	
N	932	327	
1968			
Humphrey (D)	35.8	35.8	0.0
Nixon (R)	51.8	46.3	+5.5
Wallace (AI)	12.4	17.9	−5.5
Total	100.0	100.0	
N	935	257	

More pertinent to our argument are the comparisons over time, and the figures in the last column of Table 3 show no clearcut trend from 1960 to 1976. It is true that the difference between the percentage of voters who were independents and the percentage of nonvoters who were independents tended to increase over time, but this was partially offset by a narrowing of the difference in the proportion of "others" (apoliticals, adherents of minor parties, and those not responding), the other nonpartisan category. In any event, there is no obvious source of these trends in the increasingly higher socioeconomic status of the electorate.

We might expect Table 4 to reveal Democrats doing better among nonvoters than among voters, because of the partisan differences noted above. This is the assumption of many politicians and commentators as they anticipate the effects of easing voter registration laws. However, it appears from Table 4 that the most pertinent datum about nonvoters is the high proportion of independents, not Democrats, among them, for their behavior is erratic. In 1960, they were more likely than voters to favor Nixon: In 1964 the differences were negligible. In 1968, Nixon was indeed less favored among nonvoters than voters, but the beneficiary was Wallace, not Humphrey. In 1976, the CBS News/*New York Times* survey found white nonvoters substantially more likely than white voters to favor Carter, the only clearcut validation of expectation we have found.[7] In sum, Democrats should not hope for, nor Republicans fear, an automatically more

---

[7] The author is grateful to Warren J. Mitofsky and Kathleen A. Frankovic of CBS News for generously providing data from their survey.

Democratic electorate should turnout increase. Of course, with the addition of *nonwhite* nonvoters, the Democrats should do better. In fact, in all the years discussed here, nonvoters of all races did favor the Democrat more than did voters of all races, but only in 1964 was the difference in percent Democratic greater than 3.4 percent.

In Table 4 as in Table 3, the most important data for us are those of the last column, where there is no clear trend. Despite the increasing higher-status profile of the white electorate, there has been no increase in the difference between voters' and nonvoters' propensities to support the Democrats. Two factors may come into play here. First, nonvoters of low income, relative to voters, may be less and less class-conscious, and hence fail to perceive any reason to support the party of the have-nots. Although in all years nonvoters at all income levels were more likely than voters to identify with the working rather than the middle class, the gap between voters and nonvoters on the incidence of working-class self-identification has narrowed over the years. This means that *relative to voters*, nonvoters' working-class consciousness has indeed declined. Therefore one basis for the propensity of nonvoters to support Democrats more than voters do has been undermined.

A second factor is the respondent's assessment of party differences on class issues. Are those low-income voters unable or unwilling to perceive the Democrats as the favored party? Perhaps the best question to use here is one asking which party is better for one's family's financial situation, a question which not only taps fundamental economic concerns but also avoids the problem of salience; surely everyone is concerned about the family budget. Only in 1960 and 1976 were nonvoters significantly less likely than voters to cite the Democrats as better for one's family finances, and the same is true when only respondents below the median family income are observed. In short, low-income nonvoters often lack a distinctive class identification as well as a tendency to perceive the Democrats as preferable on economic terms, so it is therefore no surprise that the Democrats do not always receive the votes of this group.

Conclusions

We have discovered that the monotonic decline in turnout from 1960 to 1976 occurred among whites and not blacks, and that some of the most commonly stated reasons do not explain the decline; that among whites, the sharpest decline occurred among those of low income and education; that appropriate tests of explanatory hypotheses by Schattschneider and Burnham may not exist, and may indeed be almost impossible to operationalize; and that white nonvoters are not an especially Democratic lot, in part because of a lack of distinctive class consciousness and in part because of a failure to cite the Democrats as better for one's family finances.

A common assumption among political scientists is that those who participate highly are more likely to affect policy than those who do not; some empirical research has provided support for this assumption (e.g., Key, 1949:307–8, 527; Verba, 1972:302, 314, 324–26, 328–29). If this is applicable to the national level, the relative drop in the turnout of lower-status whites that we have discovered may make federal policy makers less responsive to their desires than they used to be. This may be especially significant for the Democratic party, which has claimed to speak for lower- and working-class interests. Indeed, there is empirical evidence that these groups constitute less of the Democratic coalition than they used to (Axelrod, 1978:623; Ladd, 1970: 286, 1971:46–63, 1975:226–446, and 1978:96–102). While we have found that nonvoting whites would not necessarily vote Democratic in any particular election, their withdrawal from the electorate may relieve Democratic elites of some of the *perceived* pressure from that direction. At least one of President Carter's closest political advisers seems to have inferred this (see the memorandum from Patrick Caddell, quoted in Ladd, 1978:102), and it may help to explain the President's assiduous wooing of "business confidence" and conservative economic policies. This may increase the apparent feeling of lower-status whites that there is no reason to vote.

When we compare our findings to those of Rosenstone and Wolfinger (1978:22–45), who concluded that liberalizing registration laws would not significantly change the class profile of the electorate, it seems that whatever *will* bring lower-status whites back to the polls must involve a perception on their part that there is sufficient payoff in voting. Only then can we expect a significant upturn in turnout.

References

Axelrod, Robert
1978 "Communication." American Political Science Review 62:622–24.
Burnham, Walter Dean
1967 "Party systems and the political process." In William Nisbet Chambers and Walter Dean Burnham (eds.), The American Party Systems. New York: Oxford.
Congressional Record
1970 CXVI, Part 31:41223–24.
Key, V. O., Jr.
1949 Southern Politics. New York: Knopf.

Kort, Fred
1973 "Regression analysis and discriminant analysis." American Political Science Review 67:555-59.

Ladd, Everett Carll, Jr.
1970 American Political Parties. New York: Norton.
1978 "The shifting party coalitions—1932-1976." In Seymour Martin Lipset (ed.), Emerging Coalitions in American Politics. San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies.

Ladd, Everett Carll, Jr., with Charles Hadley
1975 Transformations of the American Party System. New York: Norton.

Ladd, Everett Carll, Jr., Charles Hadley, and Lauriston King
1971 "A new political realignment?" The Public Interest 23:46-63.

Lane, Robert E.
1959 Political Life. New York: The Free Press.

Milbrath, Lester W.
1965 Political Participation. Chicago: Rand-McNally.

Nie, Norman H., C. Hadlai Hull, Jean G. Jenkins, Karin Steinbrenner, and Dale H. Bent
1975 SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Reiter, Howard L.
1975 "We have met the realignment." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research.

Rosenstone, Steven J., and Raymond E. Wolfinger
1978 "The effect of registration laws on voter turnout." American Political Science Review 72:22-45.

Schattschneider, E. E.
1960 The Semisovereign People. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Statistical Abstract of the United States
1977 Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census.

Verba, Sidney, and Norman H. Nie
1972 Participation in America. New York: Harper and Row.

Wolfinger, Raymond E., and Steven J. Rosenstone
1977 "Who votes?" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association.

Response Validity in Surveys of Voting Behavior

MICHAEL W. TRAUGOTT AND JOHN P. KATOSH

SURVEY researchers must always be concerned with the validity of the data they collect. Validity concerns have been a focus of considerable methodological interest since the advent of survey research. In the late 1940s, when response error became a major concern of the public pollsters, particular attention was devoted to the validity of survey responses concerning individual voting behavior (Dinerman, 1948; Miller, 1952; Parry and Crosley, 1950). The last major study which validated vote reports was conducted following the 1964 presidential election (Clausen, 1968), but before the implementation of the 1965 Civil Rights Act and the resulting increase in public access to these kinds of records. The research reported here is the result of the

---

Abstract This paper presents the results of a project which validated the reported registration and voting behavior of respondents in a national election study. The accuracy of reported voting behavior in the 1976 general election is assessed in terms of the demographic characteristics of the respondents to the Center for Political Studies National Election Study as well as the extent of their participation in a survey panel begun in 1972. Increased levels of registration and turnout are observed in association with the number of interviews in which respondents participated, and three alternative social psychological models of the effects of preelection interviews are evaluated. Although the interview apparently served as a stimulus to voting, neither a model associated with self-concept theory nor alienation theory appears to explain the phenomenon adequately. The interview effect is significant and appears to be cumulative, indicating that researchers using the survey method with panel designs should be sensitive to the effects of their method on the behavior which they are trying to measure.

Michael W. Traugott is Study Director in the Center for Political Studies and Lecturer in the Department of Political Science, and John P. Katosh is Assistant Study Director in the Center for Political Studies, The University of Michigan. Portions of the data utilized in this research were made available by the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research. The data for the CPS 1976 American National Election Study were originally collected under a grant from the National Science Foundation. Neither the original collectors of the data nor the Consortium bears any responsibility for the analyses or interpretations presented here.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1979 by The Trustees of Columbia University
Published by Elsevier North-Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/79/0043-359/$1.75

first national study to replicate that effort based upon the panel study of the American electorate conducted by the Center for Political Studies from 1972 to 1976. The presentation includes a discussion of the magnitude of the misreporting of registration status and voting behavior as well as the characteristics of those who are most likely to misreport their registration or voting. It also includes an evaluation of three competing explanations of an apparent "interview effect" on voting behavior.

Estimating Registration and Voting from Surveys

Clausen's report on the results of the 1964 vote validation study stands to date as the only major investigation of the validity of voting reports in surveys. Clausen began his analysis by examining the relationship between estimates of voting derived from the Survey Research Center's (SRC) 1964 Election Study and the Census Bureau's Voting Supplement to the November 1964 Current Population Survey (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1965). He attempted to explain the overreport of turnout by respondents in two surveys by differences between the samples and the electorate as a whole. This resulted in adjustments to both the numerator and denominator of the official turnout estimate to make them more comparable to the sampled populations in both of the surveys. He then compared that "revised" official estimate of voting with the turnout estimates from each of the surveys. Finally, he reported on the results of an official records check in an attempt to ascertain the sources and consequences of the remaining differences in turnout estimates.

The data reported here are based upon equivalent surveys conducted in conjunction with the 1976 presidential election. We have attempted to replicate in our study the procedures Clausen used in 1964. The two survey sources are (1) the Center for Political Studies (CPS) 1976 National Election Study, which yielded an estimated turnout rate of 72 percent, and (2) the Census Bureau's Voting Supplement to the November 1976 Current Population Survey (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1978), which yielded an estimated turnout rate of 59 percent. Both of these turnout estimates exceed the official estimate of turnout of 54 percent, which was based upon actual election returns.

As noted above, Clausen "adjusted" both the numerator and denominator in the official estimate of turnout in order to bring them more in line with the sample population of the two surveys. Because both of the survey samples covered only the continental United States, Clausen "corrected" the numerator by deleting the vote returns from Alaska and Hawaii. The essence of the adjustments to the denominator was the elimination of resident aliens, as well as the voting age population of Alaska and Hawaii, and a reduction by 1 percent of the remaining population who were physically or otherwise incapacitated and thus could not be represented in the sample population. Repeating these corrections for 1976 results in a revised numerator of 81.8 million votes cast and a revised denominator of 144.3 million eligible citizens of voting age, implying a "revised" official estimate of 1976 turnout of 56.2 percent.

When this revised figure for 1976 is compared to the Bureau of the Census estimate the difference falls within sampling error although the estimate from the Census Bureau remains the higher of the two. However, a substantial difference—16 percentage points—remains between the revised official estimate and the CPS Election Study estimate of voting turnout. One cause of this overreport might lie in the characteristics of the sample of CPS respondents. Another cause might be the fact that the 1976 Election Study included a preelection interview as well as a postelection interview (the Census Bureau study uses only a postelection interview), and some respondents who otherwise would not have voted may have been stimulated to do so because they were interviewed just prior to the election.

Validating Reported Registration and Voting in 1976

Data are presented in Table 1 for the sample distributions of sex, education, and age of the respondents as well as reports of their registration status and voting activity for the participants in the CPS 1976 Election Study and the Census Bureau's Voting Supplement to the November 1976 Current Population Survey. In addition, data are presented separately by the race of the respondent. It should be noted that the Bureau of the Census utilizes procedures to weight its survey data to conform to known marginal distributions of important demographic characteristics of the population. In the case of the Voting Supplement, the turnout estimates are then derived straightforwardly from the use of the weighted data. The Center for Political Studies data are not weighted in this fashion. Despite this methodological difference, one of the most striking features of Table 1 is the overall similarity of the sample distributions for the two national studies, which reflects the quality of both the sample design and the execution of the two surveys.

The equivalence of the distributions of respondents by their levels of education is much stronger in 1976 than it was in 1964. The CPS Election Study still slightly "overrepresents" the college-educated

Table 1. Comparison of Sample Distributions (Sex, Education, Age, and Race) and Registration and Turnout Estimates: Center for Political Studies and Census Bureau 1976 Election Studies

							Race[a]											
	Total						Whites						Blacks					
	Sample Dist.		Est. Reg. Rates[b]		Est. Turnout[b]		Sample Dist.		Est. Reg. Rates[b]		Est. Turnout[b]		Sample Dist.		Est. Reg. Rates[b]		Est. Turnout[b]	
	CPS	*Bur.*	*CPS*	*Bur.*	*CPS*	*Bur.*	*CPS*	*Bur.*	*CPS*	*Bur.*	*CPS*	*Bur.*	*CPS*	*Bur.*	*CPS*	*Bur.*	*CPS*	*Bur.*
Total	100%	100%	77%	67%	72%	59%	(88%)	(88%)	77%	68%	73%	61%	(12%)	(12%)	73%	54%	62%	45%
Sex																		
Male	42	47	79	67	77	60	43	47	79	69	77	62	33	42	78	53	78	45
Female	58	53	75	66	68	59	57	53	76	68	70	61	67	58	71	56	55	47
Education																		
Grade school	17	17	70	54	60	44	16	16	70	55	62	45	25	25	70	52	54	42
High school	51	53	72	64	66	56	51	53	73	65	68	58	50	50	68	53	56	44
College	32	30	87	79	86	74	33	31	87	81	86	75	25	25	87	62	84	56
NA	*	—	70	—	47	—	*	—	79	—	47	—	*	—	0	—	0	—
Age																		
18–20	5	8	46	47	43	38	5	8	46	50	46	41	8	8	40	33	21	23
21–24	9	10	71	55	62	46	9	10	70	57	63	48	8	8	79	40	60	30
25–44	39	37	75	66	71	59	39	36	75	67	72	60	42	42	74	55	64	41
45–64	28	30	87	76	80	69	28	30	88	77	81	70	25	25	79	64	70	59
65 or more	18	15	76	71	72	62	18	16	77	72	73	63	16	16	68	61	57	52
NA	1	—	64	—	73	—	1	—	67	—	70	—	*	—	50	—	100	—
CPS (*N*)	(2,882)		(2,865)[d]		(2,415)[e]		(2,504)		(2,492)[d]		(2,121)[e]		(354)		(349)[b]		(272)[c]	

[a] Excludes those for whom race was not ascertained.

[b] The figures in these columns are the percent of sample respondents who claimed to be registered or to have voted.

[c] The sample *N*'s for the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey are not published. Rather, the data are weighted to estimate the entire U.S. eligible voting population.

[d] Excludes those for whom registration status was not ascertained.

[e] Includes only those with a post-election interview.

* Less than .5%

but not, as occurred in 1964, at the expense of "underrepresenting" the grade-school-educated population. However, it should be noted that with respect to age, the CPS Election Study still "underrepresents" the youngest voting age group. To the extent that these younger groups are consistently characterized by the lowest levels of registration and voting (as evidenced by both studies), one might expect the overall registration and voting figures derived from the CPS Election Study to be slightly inflated.

On the other hand, the CPS Election Study also "underrepresents" males and by a margin twice as large as in 1964, a sampling difference whose impact is not clear. According to the Bureau estimates of registration and voting, it should not make much difference whether there are relatively fewer (or more) men than women in the survey since their participation rates were virtually identical in 1976. However, according to the CPS Election Study estimates, it would make a difference because men seem to participate at higher rates than women. Using these CPS Election Study estimates, then, one might expect the overall registration and voting figures to be slightly deflated because of the underrepresentation of men in the sample.

Regardless of the nature of any sampling fluctuations between the two samples, the most important feature of Table 1 is the clear and consistent manner by which the registration and voting estimates from the CPS Election Study exceed those from the Census Bureau's study. In every category but two (overall registration among eighteen- to twenty-year-olds, and voting turnout among eighteen- to twenty-year-old blacks) the rates derived from the CPS Election Study are higher than those from the Census Bureau. Overall, the CPS estimated registration rate exceeds the Bureau's rate by 10 percentage points, and the CPS estimated voting rate is 13 percentage points higher than the Census rate. When controlling for race, the differences in the two studies' figures increase dramatically for nonwhites—19 percentage points for registration and 17 for turnout—and decrease only slightly for whites—to about 9 and 12 percentage points for registration and voting, respectively. In his study of the 1964 election, Clausen found differences in estimated turnout between the two data sources to be 11 percentage points for whites and 14 percentage points for blacks. He did not present any similar data for estimated registration rates.

Are these large differences in the estimated participation rates between these two national studies adequately explained by differences in the samples? Clausen suggested part of the difference in 1964 was probably a result of the Census Bureau's more complete coverage of the eligible voting population, in terms of both the interview completion rate and the nature of the sample. In 1976 these explanations were still valid. The response rate for the Census Bureau's 1976 election survey of households, which accepted reports of behavior from related individuals, was approximately 96 percent, whereas the response rate for the 1976 CPS Election Study of individuals was about 65 percent. Analysis of postelection mortality among preelection respondents in the CPS Election Studies generally indicates that refusals to participate in an election study survey are more likely to occur among citizens with low levels of interest in politics and hence low political participation rates. We infer that the characteristics of those who initially refuse to be interviewed are similar, so that higher aggregate voting rates result for the survey as a whole. Therefore, the assumption is that although the response rate to the CPS survey is lower, the registration and voting estimates derived from those who were interviewed are higher. These effects are discussed in greater detail below.

We have attempted to account for the discrepancy between the CPS Election Study and Census Bureau's estimates of registration and voter turnout, but both those estimates are somewhat higher than the revised "official" estimate of voter turnout on election day in 1976. The most plausible explanation for these differences is response error—respondents have "misreported" (deliberately or otherwise) their registration status or voting behavior. In order to ascertain the magnitude of registration and vote misreporting, the Center for Political Studies in mid-1977, as part of a larger study on election administration, attempted to examine the official registration and voting records for each respondent who had participated in a postelection interview as a part of the 1972, 1974, or 1976 National Election Studies. The data from the Vote Validation Study which were utilized in the research reported here are from the registration and voting records for the postelection respondents in the national cross-section sample of the CPS 1976 Election Study.

The results from the Vote Validation Study indicate that only 69 percent of the respondents were found to be actually registered, compared to 77 percent of the respondents who said in their interview they were registered to vote. And while 72 percent of the respondents claimed to have voted in the 1976 presidential election, the check of the administrative records yielded a turnout figure of only 61 percent. Both of these "validated" figures are much closer to the revised official estimates than were the respondents' self-report figures. This is a clear indication that a fairly large amount of "misreporting" occurred among respondents to the 1976 CPS National Election Study.

The data in Table 2 compare the registration and voting information for the 1976 Election Study respondents obtained from the Vote Validation Study with the respondents' self-report of their registration and voting participation. For the most part, the Vote Validation respondent classifications are self-explanatory. Categories 2 and 6, however, require some clarification. Category 2 identifies a group of respondents for whom there were registration records but no available voting records for the 1976 general election. Category 6 identifies two respondents who were apparently interviewed by mistake; that is, they resided in counties that were not a part of the election study sample frame, and thus no check of their records was attempted.

We define "misreporters" as those respondents whose self-report on the survey of registration status or voting behavior was not verified when the official records check was made. That is, they are people who reported that they were registered or that they voted, but no official record of that behavior was found. Conversely, some people reported that they were not registered or did not vote, but according to the official records, they actually were registered or had voted. Those survey respondents whose names or registration status

Table 2. Vote Validation Respondent Classification by Election Study Self-Reports of Registration and Voting

	Election Study Self-Report					
	Registered			*Voted*		
Vote Validation Respondent Classification[a]	*Yes*	*No*	*Don't Know*	*Yes*	*No*	*(N)*
1. Registration recorded Vote recorded	1358	$\boxed{55}$	4	1390	$\boxed{27}$	1417
2. Registration recorded No voting information	28	$\boxed{1}$	—	23	6	29
3. Registration recorded No record of voting	157	$\boxed{18}$	1	$\boxed{70}$	106	176
4. No record of registration No record of voting	$\boxed{288}$	439	9	$\boxed{217}$	519	736
5. Name of respondent not obtained	35	20	—	31	24	55
6. Out of P.S.U.: no record check attempted	1	1	—	1	1	2
	1867	534	14	1732	683	2415

NOTE: The boxed figures represent those individuals who are considered to be "misreporters."

[a] The Vote Validation Respondent Classification categories above compare to the categories in Clausen's Table 2 "Respondent Classification" as follows:

Vote Validation	1	2	3	4	5	6
Clausen	3	4	8	9	5	7

The remainder of Clausen's categories (1, 2, 6, 10) are inappropriate for the 1976 Vote Validation study because they deal with absentee voting behavior and poll tax requirements.

were not obtained in the survey are excluded from classification, as are those respondents whose voting records could not be checked. Summing those cell entries where it is possible to identify whether a correct or an incorrect report was made results in classifying a total of 15 percent of the study respondents as registration misreporters and 14 percent of the respondents as voting misreporters.

The data in Table 3 characterize these misreporters according to a brief list of selected variables. Neither sex nor education is very strongly related to whether or not a respondent is a misreporter. Age, race, and income are related, however, with the younger, nonwhite, and low income groups more likely to misreport their registration and voting. There are some differences between misreporters on two of the attitudinal indices—the measures of political efficacy and citizen duty—but with the exception of the registration misreporters' relatively low citizen duty scores, the differences are not very great. Democrats misreport their registration and voting more often than Republicans, but the differences by levels of partisanship are insignificant. There are some clear differences, however, in misreporting based upon how many previous election studies a respondent has participated in. That is, those who were participating in an election study survey for the first time in 1976 were about twice as likely to misreport their registration or voting status as those who were interviewed for the third election study.

In addition to our general concern with overreporting of voting, we were also specifically interested in what effect the misreporting might have on our sample survey report of the partisan division of the vote in the 1976 presidential election. Of those election study respondents who reported voting for either Jimmy Carter or Gerald Ford in 1976, 51.5 percent reported having cast their ballots for Carter. However, when we consider only those respondents whose reports of having voted could be verified, the number who said they supported Carter slips to 48.8 percent, giving Ford 51.2 percent. Although the differences reflected in both of these results are well within sampling error, they do illustrate a distinct partisan difference in the candidate preferences of the misreporters. For those people whose voting report could not be verified, a claim of support for Carter over Ford ran almost two to one. These figures may provide some evidence of a small postelection "bandwagon" effect in favor of Carter, or they may be an indication of how these respondents would have cast their votes if they had gone to the polls.

Clausen would not be surprised by the small amount of overreport of the Carter vote in the 1976 CPS Election Study. At the conclusion of his 1964 article he presented data which showed that the survey

Table 3. Selected Characteristics of Respondents Who Misreported Their Registration or Voting, 1976

	Percent Misreporting Registration	*Percent Misreporting Voting*
Total Sample[a]	15%	14%
Sex		
Male	17	15
Female	15	12
Education		
Grade school	14	15
High school	16	12
College	15	14
Age		
18–24	22	18
45 or older	12	12
Race		
Nonwhite	24	20
White	14	12
Income		
Less than $6,000	22	19
$20,000 or more	12	10
Political efficacy		
Very low	17	15
Very high	13	12
Political trust		
Very low	16	13
Very high	16	12
Citizen duty		
Very low	22	15
Very high	15	14
Party identification		
Democrat	16	16
Independent	16	13
Republican	13	11
Partisan strength		
Strong	16	14
Weak	15	14
Independent & Independent-leaner	13	16
Number of election studies interviewed		
1 (1976)	19	16
2 (1974 and 1976)	13	15
3 (1972, 1974, and 1976)	10	9

[a] Excluding those respondents whose names were not obtained or who resided out of the P.S.U. (categories 5 and 6 in Table 2) and, for voting only, respondents who resided in places where the voting records could not be checked (category 2 in Table 2).

overreport of the winner's proportion of the two-party vote appeared to be a function of the candidate being advantaged by the short-term forces of the campaign. That is, the greater the margin by which the candidate was able to exceed his party's expected "normal vote," the greater was the overreport of candidate preference in his favor (Converse, 1966), allowing for the initial partisan majority enjoyed by the Democrats.

In 1976, the expected normal vote was 53.4 percent Democratic (Miller et al., 1979). As the Democratic candidate, Carter received only 51.1 percent of the two-party vote. In effect, ~~Carter lost the campaign~~ while winning the election. Moreover, Ford could not mobilize enough of the support provided by his incumbency to win the election. Carter's net "loss" of 2.3 percentage points from his expected normal vote suggests that not many of the "low interest" citizenry who might have been stimulated by either the events of the campaign or the preelection interview voted Democratic.

This is demonstrated in Table 4 which compares the deviation from the normal vote for the political party that won the presidential election in a given year and the amount of the overreport of the vote for that party in the CPS postelection study for ~~the same year~~. The data from 1952 to 1964 come from Clausen, and the data for 1968 to 1976 have been added. The trend exhibited in the data for the earlier years is clearly continued in 1976. The low level of overreport of voting for Carter is associated with his negative deviation from the normal Democrat vote.

Competing Explanations for "Interview Effects" on Voting

In addition to identifying the sources of likely error in the overestimates of voting derived from the Survey Research Center's 1964 Election Study and the Bureau of the Census November Voter Supplement conducted in the same year, Clausen also observed that the validated participation rate in the SRC study remained greater than the turnout figure for the nation as a whole or in the "corrected" Census Survey. Considering that each SRC Election Study respon-

Table 4. Deviation from "Normal" Vote and Overestimate of the Winner's Percentage in Presidential Elections, SRC/CPS Data, 1952–1976

Election	*Winner*	*Net Deviation Toward Party of Winners*	*Overestimate of Winner's Margin*[a]
1952	Republican	13.55	2.7
1956	Republican	13.18	1.9
1960	Democrat	−5.14	−0.7
1964	Democrat	6.84	6.0
1968[b]	Republican	6.1	2.8
1972	Republican	15.3	2.5
1976	Democrat	−2.3	0.4

[a] Computed using only Humphrey and Nixon votes.

[b] Based upon postelection surveys.

dent was interviewed before the election as well as after, Clausen developed a "stimulus hypothesis" to explain this phenomenon: "An additional anomaly is introduced into the sample turnout estimate by the fact that an interview was conducted before as well as after the election. This raised the possibility that the preelection interview may have stimulated interest *and participation* in the election among the survey respondents" (Clausen, 1968).

The role of personal contact by interviewers as well as by political parties and their loyal supporters in increasing levels of voter turnout is well documented (Gosnell, 1927; Eldersveld, 1956; Kramer, 1970; Crotty, 1971). And despite the fact that higher levels of voter participation among survey panel respondents interviewed before an election are commonly observed, only recently have alternatives to the stimulus hypothesis been formulated. Researchers utilizing alienation theory and self-concept theory have suggested two additional explanations for the apparent interview effect. Kraut and McConahay (1973) advocate an "alienation reduction hypothesis," which suggests that the personal contact of the interview alters the individual's perception of the political environment, diminishing or eliminating the psychological barrier that many citizens see as cutting them off from political participation. Unfortunately, they do not present any data from their 1970 New Haven study which include measures of political alienation. Although their hypothesis seems plausible, they do not demonstrate that the interview experience results in changes in these basic attitudes and hence in voting behavior.

Kraut and McConahay also posit a "self-concept hypothesis," which suggests that, after being interviewed or interacting with a campaign worker, an individual begins to view himself as more politically inclined—"having engaged in political activity, he begins to think of himself as politically active, somewhat involved in politics, and this increases the likelihood that he votes" (pp. 404–405). Kraut and McConahay present no data directly testing this hypothesis, but a test of this hypothesis was presented by Yalch (1976) in a study of voters in a Chicago ward during special elections in 1973. He found that preelection interviews have a stimulus effect but that the effect of the experimental treatment decays rapidly. Yalch concludes that his research confirms the "stimulus hypothesis" and disconfirms both the "alienation reduction" and "self-concept" hypotheses. Unfortunately, no measures of basic personal or political attitudes relating to political alienation or enhanced self-concept were presented as part of Yalch's findings.

The data from the 1976 Vote Validation Study are particularly well suited to testing these three competing hypotheses in a rather direct fashion. The CPS 1976 Election Study represents the third and final data collection point in a panel study dating back to 1972. This overcomes the Kraut-McConahay methodological criticism of Clausen's comparison of two similar but independent samples of the SRC and Bureau of the Census surveys in 1964. We have validated voting behavior in the 1976 general election for respondents who were interviewed two, three, or five times in the 1972–1976 period, including the pre- and postelection interviews of 1972, the postelection interview of 1974, and the pre- and postelection interviews of 1976. Leaving aside the 1976 postelection interview, which is critical to the validation element of the study but not to testing the stimulus hypothesis, we can look at the effect of being interviewed one, two, or four times on the respondents' likelihood of voting in the 1976 general election.

Furthermore, the typical lengthy CPS interview contains extensive questions relating to respondents' attitudes towards the candidates, parties, and issues. In particular, two basic measures of political attitudes are available to test directly the alienation reduction and self-concept hypotheses. A series of five items commonly used to construct a Political Trust Scale were administered in each of the three election studies (Robinson et al., 1968). This scale measures the respondent's alienation from the political system. In addition, a series of four items commonly used to construct a Political Efficacy Scale were also included in the survey (Campbell et al., 1954). An individual's sense of political efficacy—the degree to which he feels he can have an impact on government—is a measure which relates directly to self-concept theory. The availability of these repeated measures for a variety of meaningfully different subsets of respondents who were interviewed different numbers of times provides us with the opportunity to examine the trends in feelings of alienation and enhanced self-concept over time and their relation to voting behavior. Specifically, the panel design permits us to test for the changes in political efficacy and political trust suggested by the alienation reduction and self-concept hypotheses, as well as to test for changes in the basic, and well-documented, relationships between these measures and voting behavior.

Results and Discussion

The significance of the effect of being interviewed on levels of voter participation is established unequivocally by the data presented in Table 5. The validated voting rate for the postelection respondents in the 1976 CPS National Election Study was 61 percent, or approx-

Table 5. Validated Voting Rates in the 1976 General Election for Selected Groups of Respondents in the CPS 1976 Election Study

	Validated Voting Rate	*N*
Complete 1976 cross-section sample	61%	2,328
Preelection interview date		
September interviewees	60	892
October–November interviewees	62	1,436
Panel status of respondents in 1976		
Supplementary cross-section	54	1,425
Previously interviewed	72	903
Respondents' panel participation		
1976 election study only	54	1,440
1974 and 1976 election studies only	61	176
1972, 1974, and 1976 election studies	75	712

imately 7 percentage points higher than the national estimate based upon aggregate election returns (54 percent), or 5 percentage points larger than the adjusted figure (56 percent) calculated earlier, which is based upon revision of the estimates of the size of the denominator in the calculation from the surveys. There was no significant difference between the turnout rates for respondents interviewed during the month immediately preceding the election (October) and those interviewed two months (September) before the election, indicating that the immediate effect of the stimulus of the interview did not vary by proximity to the actual election.

However, it is clear that the turnout rate in 1976 was substantially higher for respondents who had been interviewed prior to the 1976 Election Study compared to those interviewed for the first time in 1976. Thus, the interview effect is clearly cumulative, as an elaboration of the data shows the highest participation rate among those who were interviewed the most number of times. The observed difference of 8 percentage points between those interviewed for the first time in 1976 (54 percent) and those interviewed once prior to 1976 (61 percent) substantially increases to 21 percentage points (75 percent) for those interviewed in both prior election studies.

Before proceeding further in the presentation of findings, there are two questions of some significance raised by the data in Table 5. The first concerns the degree to which the differences associated with panel participation are the consequence of mortality among respondents rather than an effect of the interview. The answer to this question is that a mortality effect can be observed in the panel data, but it is not nearly so large as the interview effect appears to be. Respondents who refused successive interviews tend to be less involved and interested in politics than their cohorts who persisted in the panel study. And their reported voting rates (unvalidated) at the time when both groups were in the sample were about 6 percentage points lower (66 percent as opposed to 73 percent in 1972, for example). However, an extension of this analysis indicates that the interview effect is much more substantial than the consequences of mortality.

The second question concerns the relatively low rate of participation among the new respondents interviewed for the first time in 1976, less than the revised official turnout estimate calculated above (56 percent). Analysis of the demographic characteristics of the respondents in the supplementary sample shows that they are much younger and disproportionately nonwhite compared to the population as a whole. As a result, this would lead us to expect that participation rates would have been even lower among these respondents if it were not for the fact that they were interviewed before the election.

The differences in participation rates in Table 5 due to the interview are within the range of magnitude of those observed by Yalch and by Kraut-McConahay. They confirm the existence of an interview effect and demonstrate that it is cumulative, lending support to the stimulus hypothesis. The present design does not allow us to ascertain whether the effect persists or for how long, since there are no plans to check the voting records of these respondents after the 1978 election.

It is possible, however, to move to a more direct test of the competing alienation and self-concept hypotheses. Irrespective of the persistence of the interview effect, these two theories predict certain shifts in the basic distribution of attitudes which measure political alienation or enhanced self-concept as a function of having been interviewed in conjunction with the election studies. Beginning with the Index of Political Efficacy, a basic measure of an individual's sense of power in affecting the political system, the self-concept hypothesis would suggest that a shift toward the higher end in the distribution of scores on the index results from an increased perception of political influence and involvement that stems from the interview. The data in Table 6 show that this did not occur.

The initial set of distributions presented in Table 6 show that there was no significant difference in the distributions of scores on the efficacy scale for the various cross-section samples of respondents interviewed from 1972 to 1976. This is important to establish as a benchmark for subsequent comparisons indicating that there was no overall shift in these attitudes in the population as a whole. In the 1974 data, for example, the distribution of attitudes for respondents who had been interviewed in 1972 as well are compared with those for respondents who were interviewed for the first time in 1974. There are no significant differences between the distributions for "old" and

Table 6. The Distribution of Scores on the Sense of Political Efficacy Scale for Respondents in the CPS Election Studies, 1972–1976

	Political efficacy					
	Low				*High*	*N*
1972 cross-section	24%	23	22	20	11	(2,682)
1974 cross-section	22%	27	22	20	9	(2,469)
1976 cross-section	24%	23	20	22	11	(2,363)
1974 interviewees						
Panel respondents[a]	22%	23	22	22	12	(1,606)
New respondents	20%	29	22	20	9	(1,380)
1976 interviewees						
Panel respondents[b]	20%	21	22	24	12	(2,029)
New respondents	25%	24	20	22	9	(1,437)
Full panel respondents[c]						
1972 interview	20%	21	23	23	14	(1,312)
1974 interview	20%	22	22	23	13	(1,285)
1976 interview	20%	22	20	24	13	(1,204)

[a] These are respondents who were interviewed in both the 1972 and 1974 studies, although not every respondent was a member of the 1974 cross-section sample.

[b] These are respondents who were interviewed in 1976 and either or both of the 1974 and 1972 studies, although not every respondent was a member of the 1976 cross-section sample.

[c] These are the respondents who were interviewed in all three studies with data presented separately for each point in time.

"new" respondents in 1974, nor between either of these groups and the complete national cross-section of respondents in 1972. The same conclusion can be drawn by comparing "new" and "old" respondents in 1976 and the distributions of their efficacy scores with those for 1974 and 1972. Although it may appear that there is a difference between the new and panel respondents in 1976, this difference is more appropriately attributed to the characteristics of the new respondents than it is to a change in the distribution of efficacy scores for respondents who were full participants in the panel. The data for the panel respondents are displayed separately for each time they were interviewed in 1972, 1974, and 1976. These distributions are neither shifting over time nor different from any of the other groups of respondents for whom data are presented in the table.

It is just as important, of course, to take advantage of the longitudinal element of the panel design to see if individual attitudes changed over time. The range of intercorrelations for each of three pairs of comparisons of respondents interviewed at two or more points in time was between .57 and .61, as measured by gamma. These data indicate that there were no substantial changes in self-concept as a result of being interviewed, as measured by sense of political efficacy. Additionally, there was no change in the positive relationship between levels of political efficacy and self-reported voting.

The second competing hypothesis suggests that the interview acts as a mediating factor by reducing the respondents' sense of alienation from the political system, which thus results in increased voting participation. The most common measure of alienation employed by political scientists is the Trust in Government Scale. It is composed of five items which reflect beliefs in the fairness of the political system and the honesty and competence of those who serve in it. The observed relationship between trust in government and voting is much weaker than the observed relationship between efficacy and voting. But again, as a minimum condition, the alienation reduction hypothesis would lead us to expect that the frequency of being interviewed should be associated with increased levels of trust in government. This should in turn be associated with higher levels of turnout.

Data are presented in Table 7 for the distribution of scores on the Trust in Government Scale for various sample components of the 1972, 1974, and 1976 National Election Studies. The data for the three cross-sections presented initially illustrate the apparent "bottoming out" of a recent national trend in declining levels of trust attributable to Watergate. In both 1974 and 1976, the distribution of scores for the two groups of panel respondents and those who were added as a supplement to reproduce a national cross-section are very similar to each other. The distributions of scores for full panel respondents

Table 7. The Distribution of Scores on the Trust in Government Scale for Respondents in the CPS Election Studies, 1972–1976

	Trust in Government					
	Low				*High*	*N*
1972 cross-section	14%	20	36	17	13	(2,246)
1974 cross-section	21%	27	35	11	6	(2,489)
1976 cross-section	22%	29	35	10	5	(2,822)
1976 interviewees						
Panel respondents[a]	21%	27	34	12	6	(1,604)
New respondents	21%	26	36	10	6	(1,401)
1976 interviewees						
Panel respondents[b]	22%	28	34	11	5	(2,226)
New respondents	21%	28	36	9	5	(1,816)
Full panel respondents[c]						
1972 interview	15%	20	36	17	13	(1,303)
1974 interview	20%	26	35	12	6	(1,284)
1976 interview	20%	29	34	11	6	(1,290)

[a] These are respondents who were interviewed in both the 1972 and 1974 studies, although not every respondent was a member of the 1974 cross-section sample.

[b] These are respondents who were interviewed in 1976 and either or both of the 1974 and 1972 studies, although not every respondent was a member of the 1976 cross-section sample.

[c] These are the respondents who were interviewed in all three studies with data presented separately for each point in time.

demonstrate that levels of trust among this group declined from 1972 to 1974 in accord with the national trend, but contrary to what would have been expected according to the alienation reduction hypothesis. From 1974 to 1976, the distribution stabilized, again contrary to the alienation reduction hypothesis. Thus, there is no effect of being interviewed which can be associated with reduced levels of alienation.

Turning to the relationship between levels of trust in government for the same respondents measured at different points in time, the correlations (gammas) between these attitudes are in about the same range as those for political efficacy (.47 to .59). Trust in government is not generally a very good predictor of voting behavior, and there is no variation from this basic relationship in the 1972, 1974, or 1976 data for any subgroup of respondents. The alienation reduction hypothesis might have led us to expect that even though there is no commonly found relationship between trust and voting, an increased level of trust might be associated with an increased likelihood of voting. This expected variation on the basic hypothesis is not supported by the data.

The results of the analysis presented above confirm that there is an interview effect on the voting behavior of survey respondents. Moreover, this effect is clearly cumulative, increasing with the number of times an individual is interviewed. However, it cannot be determined from the available data whether the effect is long- or short-lived. There is some basis for inferring that repeated interviews may result in a long-term effect, to the extent that voting can be seen as a habitual form of behavior whose likelihood increases as a function of the number of past elections in which a person has participated. If repeated interviews result in successively greater instances of voting, then the "habit" may eventually be acquired.

As for the testing of the three alternative explanations of the interview effect, the stimulus hypothesis was confirmed, whereas the alienation reduction and self-concept hypotheses were disconfirmed. There were no significant shifts in individual attitudes related to trust in government or sense of political efficacy among the panel respondents which could be attributed to being interviewed. Nor was there a shift in the commonly observed relationships between either of these measures and reported voting behavior.

Summary

This paper has presented findings from a study of the validation of respondents' self-reported political behavior through a check of relevant administrative records. This check of reported registration and voting revealed large amounts of overreport which could be explained by attitudinal measures that identified less politically active respondents as those most likely to err in their reports. There was also a predictable consequence of the misreporting in the partisan division of reported candidate preference. The results of the validation effort further indicated a substantial effect of the interview itself on the central behavior which it was intended to measure, indicating that some respondents were stimulated to vote by the very act of being interviewed.

While studies of voting behavior are frequently conducted and often the most heavily publicized examples of sample surveys, they do not, of course, represent the only research setting in which the consequences of an interview effect may be important. The results presented above should be of concern to social scientists and market researchers who utilize survey methods with panel designs because they demonstrate that these techniques can have a direct consequence on the behavior of respondents. The data collection method represents a potential source of contamination to the very relationships which it is being used to measure.

References

Campbell, Angus, Gerald Gurin, and Warren Miller
1954 The Voter Decides. Evanston: Row and Peterson.

Center for Political Studies
1974 The SRC 1964 American National Election Study (2nd ed.). Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research.
1978 The CPS 1972, 1974, and 1976 American National Election Series. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research.

Clausen, Aage
1968 "Response validity: vote report." Public Opinion Quarterly 41:56–64.

Converse, Philip E.
1966 "The concept of a normal vote." In A. Campbell, P. Converse, W. Miller, and D. Stokes, Elections and the Political Order. New York: Wiley.

Crotty, William J.
1971 "Party effort and its impact on the vote." American Political Science Review 69:439–50.

Dinerman, Helen
1948 "1948 votes in the making—a preview." Public Opinion Quarterly 12:585–98.

Eldersveld, Samuel J.
1956 "Experimental propaganda techniques and voting behavior." American Political Science Review 50:154–65.

Gosnell, Harold F.
1927 Getting Out the Vote. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kramer, Gerald
1970 "The effects of precinct level canvassing on voter behavior." Public Opinion Quarterly 34:560–72.
Kraut, Robert E., and John B. McConahay
1973 "How being interviewed affects voting: an experiment." Public Opinion Quarterly 16:381–98.
Miller, Mungo
1952 "The Waukegan study of voter turnout prediction." Public Opinion Quarterly 16:381–98.
Miller, Warren E., Arthur H. Miller, and Edward J. Schneider
1979 American National Election Studies Data Sourcebook. Cambridge: Harvard University Press (forthcoming).
Parry, Hugh J., and Helen M. Crossley
1950 "Validity of responses to survey questions." Public Opinion Quarterly 14:61–80.
Robinson, John P., Jerrold G. Rusk, and Kendra B. Head
1968 Measures of Political Attitudes. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research.
Scammon, Richard M., and Alice V. McGillivray (eds.)
1977 America Votes 12. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly.
U. S. Bureau of the Census
1978 "Voting and registration in the election of 1976." Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 322.
1965 "Voter participation in the national election: November 1964." Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 143.
Yalch, Richard F.
1976 "Pre-election interview effects on voter turnout." Public Opinion Quarterly. 40:331–36.

The Polls: Terrorism and Hijacking

CONNIE DE BOER

THE public is deeply concerned over the increase in the frequency of acts of violence involving the holding of hostages and other terrorism. Late in 1977, 90 percent of the population of the United States considered terrorism a very serious problem, and according to an opinion survey conducted half a year later in Great Britain, 85 percent of the British population hold the same view. Regarding terrorism in their own country, and this applies specifically to Great Britain, fewer people consider terrorism to be a very serious problem (Harris, SOC).

The farther from home the acts of violence take place, the less sure people are whether the perpetrators are to be seen as terrorists or freedom fighters. In Great Britain, the IRA are regarded as terrorists by 92 percent; the PLO by 70 percent, and the people opposing Mr. Smith in Rhodesia by 34 percent. The "Don't know" percentage rises from 6 percent for the IRA to 21 percent for the PLO, and to 29 percent for the people opposing Mr. Smith (SOC, Dec. 1977).

Harris and Social Surveys put before the public a list of statements on causes of terrorism asking respondents to indicate whether they felt each statement referred to a major, a minor, or hardly a cause of terrorism. A marked feature of the results is that the "Not sure/Don't know" percentages are much higher in Great Britain than they are in the United States. Furthermore, almost every statement is seen as a major cause of terrorism by a fairly high percentage of the population.

The list of statements on possible solutions of terrorism also finds wide approval among the public. Either Harris and SOC have not included extreme views in the list of statements, or people are prepared to endorse any possible solution to terrorism, even if they would not normally approve of the method employed. The latter explanation is supported by the results of other opinion surveys: Introduction of the death penalty for terrorists is favored by a majority of 55 percent in Germany (DMS, 1976), 55 percent in the United States (Harris, 1977), and 71 percent in Great Britain (SOC, 1978). In the Netherlands, 62 percent are in favor of placing South Moluccans under strict surveillance, even if the country should

---

Connie de Boer is Research Assistant at the POLLS Archives and the Baschwitz Institute of Collective Behavior and Public Opinion, University of Amsterdam.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1979 by The Trustees of Columbia University

Published by Elsevier North-Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/79/0043-410/$1.75

somewhat resemble a police state in that case; 73 percent of the Dutch want especially vigorous action taken against terrorists, and 44 percent feel the terrorists are not entitled to the same rights as other arrested suspects.

In Germany, several opinion surveys indicate the willingness of people to sacrifice their personal rights and liberties and to accept a strengthened influence of the state and the police if this can serve the purpose of combating terrorism (DMS). An ample majority of the German people (77 percent) are in agreement with the news embargo that was instituted by the government a few days after Schleyer was kidnapped by the RAF. They approve because the publicity aimed for by the terrorists is thus withheld from them, and also because it enables the politicians to decide freely without continuously having to justify their decisions (DMS, 1977).

The opinion survey conducted early 1978 in Germany (DMS, Jan. 1978) also reveals that the battle against terrorists can have serious consequences for civil liberties: 21 percent, or 1 out of 5 Germans, feel that "one nowadays has to be careful with what one says in the Federal Republic; one always has to be afraid of being misunderstood and of being at once suspected of sympathizing with the terrorists." And a sympathizer, according to 18 percent of the German population, is a person who does not wish the death penalty introduced for the terrorists, or, according to 56 percent, a person who feels compassion for the terrorists because he believes them to commit their crimes out of despair only.

The following research institutes have given us permission to publish the results of their surveys, for which we here express our sincere thanks and indebtedness.

AIPO—American Institute for Public Opinion, USA
DMS—Institut für Demoskopie, West Germany
EMNID—Emnid Institut GmbH & Co., West Germany
Harris—The Harris Survey, USA
NIPO—Nederlands Instituut voor de Publieke Opinie, Netherlands
REOP—Instituto de la Opinion Publica, Spain
SOC—Social Surveys Ltd., Great Britain
Texas Poll—The Texas Poll, USA

The dates given with the tables are the publication dates of the research results. Where a date is marked with an asterisk, several breakdowns are given in the corresponding publication which have not been included in the present article. The surveys are based on nation- or statewide representative samples of adults. For more information or additional breakdowns, contact The Polls Archives, Weteringschans 100–102, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Terrorism—A Serious Problem

USA—Harris (Dec. 1977/Great Britain—SOC (June 1978): *How serious a problem do you feel terrorism is in the world, where terrorists kidnap businessmen, hijack planes and commit other violence–very serious, only somewhat serious, or hardly serious at all?*

	USA	*Great Britain*
Very serious	90%	85%
Only somewhat serious	9	12
Hardly serious at all	1	2
Not sure/Don't know	—	1

How serious do you feel terrorism is here in (own country)—very serious, only somewhat serious, or hardly serious at all?

	USA	*Great Britain*
Very serious	60%	30%
Only somewhat serious	31	40
Hardly serious at all	7	27
Not sure/Don't know	2	3

West Germany—EMNID: *What do you consider the most important public event of the year 1977?* [Open answers, Jan. 1978*]

	Total
Terrorism, kidnappings, suicides of terrorists	59%
Peace efforts, Israel-Egypt	15
Peace efforts generally	3
Birth/death of famous personalities	1
Other answers	5
No answer	17

Terrorist—Criminals or Freedom Fighters?

Great Britain—SOC: *People who are called terrorists by some people may be seen as freedom fighters by others. What is your view of people who commit acts of violence against civilian populations?* (Dec. 1977)

	Terrorists	*Freedom Fighters*	*Don't Know*
First, would you say the IRA are terrorists or freedom fighters?	92%	3%	6%
And what about the PLO, the Palestine Liberation Organization?	70	9	21
And the people opposing Mr. Smith in Rhodesia?	34	37	29

People who are called terrorists by some people may be seen as freedom fighters by others. What is your view of these people who commit acts of violence against civilian populations? Are they always justified in what they do, sometimes justified, or never justified? (Jan. 1978)

Always justified	2%
Sometimes justified	16
Never justified	77
Don't know	5

Spain—REOP: *Would you say that hijacking should always be regarded as a common crime, or that its criminal character can be predominated by political implications?* (Oct/Dec 1972*)

Should always be considered a common crime	32%
Political implications can predominate	60
No answer	8

Causes of Terrorism

USA–Harris (Dec. 1977)/Great Britain–SOC (June 1978):

	Major	*Minor*	*Hardly*	*Not Sure/ Don't Know*
Acts of terrorism receive so much coverage in the news that this encourages terrorists to further acts of terror.				
USA	78%	12%	3%	7%
Great Britain	60	20	10	10
Terrorism is growing in the world because the countries of the world have been too soft in dealing with terrorists.				
USA	76	12	4	8
Great Britain	75	10	7	8
Terrorism has always been the weapon used by radicals who feel the system is totally unjust.				
USA	70	15	5	10
Great Britain	44	22	10	24
As in Germany, young radicals feel their cause can only achieve attention by committing acts of violence.				
USA	68	16	5	11
Great Britain	48	20	11	21
Racial and religious minorities feel their cause can only be brought to attention through terror acts.				
USA	54	22	12	12
Great Britain	42	25	16	17
A modern, complex industrial society makes it easy for a small number of terrorists to commit major acts of violence.				
USA	49	25	12	14
Great Britain	34	22	15	29
Professional terrorists are trained by Palestinian Arabs in Lebanon.				
USA	40	18	11	31
Great Britain	39	15	12	34
Professional terrorists are trained by President Khadafy of Lybia.				
USA	27	18	11	44
Great Britain	18	14	15	53

Spain—REOP: *You may have heard that a number of acts of terrorism have been perpetrated all over the world. What do you believe to be the cause of these actions?* (Oct./Dec. 1972*)

Eagerness to receive attention on the part of those who commit them	18%
It is a way to defend their rights	17
It is a form of crime which is typical of our time	39
It is the only way of fighting that is open to them	14
Others	4
No answer	7

Solution and Prevention of Terrorism

USA—Texas Poll: *What do you personally feel should be done to prevent the hijacking of airplanes?* (Nov. 1970)

Put guards on planes	40%
Search all passengers	25
Use detection devices	14
Check all baggage	5
Screen passengers	5
Seal off pilots	2
Provide severe penalties	14
Extradite hijackers	4
Other replies	10
Undecided	21
	(multiple answers)

USA—Harris (Dec. 1977)/Great Britain—SOC (June 1978): *Now let me ask you about some solutions that have been proposed as ways of dealing with terrorism. For each, tell me if you favor or oppose that solution.*

	Favor	*Oppose*	*Not Sure*
Every country should develop special teams of commandos who are experts at capturing terrorists while saving the lives of hostages.			
USA	89%	5%	6%
Great Britain	85	5	10
All airline service should be cut off to and from any country which allows terrorists to use that country as a base of training or operations, or which gives refuge to terrorists or lets them go free.			
USA	79	11	10
Great Britain	67	20	13
A special world force should be organized which would operate in any country of the world and which would investigate terrorist groups, arrest them, and put their leaders and members to death.			
USA	55	29	16
Great Britain	66	19	15
All those caught committing acts of terror should be convicted and given the death penalty.			
USA	55	31	14
Great Britain	71	15	14
Countries should refuse to make any concessions to terrorists, such as paying ransoms or freeing other terrorists from prison, even if this means people who are kidnapped or held hostage end up being killed by the terrorists.			
USA	51	31	18
Great Britain	65	18	17

Spain—REOP: *Which of the methods I am going to read to you would constitute, in your opinion, the most effective means towards avoiding hijackings and captures?* (Oct./Dec. 1972*)

Never give in to the demands of the captors	18%
Study the case thoroughly and make concessions so as to prevent worse	23
Respond with the same violence	3
Present the problems of the hijackers to the UN, so that their case may be heard	12
Isolate the country that shelters, protects, or aids them	11
Mete out exemplary punishment to the captors	25
Others	2
No answer	5

West Germany—DMS: *Do you fundamentally favor or oppose the introduction of the death penalty for terrorists?* (Aug. 1976)

Favor	*Oppose*	*Undecided*
55%	29%	16%

Great Britain—SOC: *Do you think that aircraft hijackers should or should not be surrendered to the countries from which they hijack planes?*

	May 1973	*Nov. 1977*
Should	74%	81%
Should not	9	8
Don't know	17	11

Some countries refuse to hand over hijackers. Do you think that all other countries should stop all air communications with such countries or not?

	May 1973	*Nov. 1977*
Should	43%	47%
Should not	29	33
Don't know	28	20

Side Effects of the Battle Against Terrorists

Spain—REOP: *As you know, there has been an attempted kidnaping with victims at the Olympic Games. Who do you believe is principally responsible for these events?* (Oct./Dec. 1972*)

The Munich police who attempted a surprise attack and fired first	12%
The Palestinian terrorists who took the Israeli athletes hostage	42
The Israeli athletes in trying to defend themselves and fighting their aggressors	3
The State of Israel for refusing to negotiate	15
Deficiency of the security system at the Munich olympics	14
Other	3
No answer	11

When comparing the events at Munich and the reprisals taken by the State of Israel against communities of Palestinian refugees, which has made the deeper impression upon you? (Oct./Dec. 1972*)

The Munich massacre	52%
The reprisals of the State of Israel	39
No answer	10

Netherlands—NIPO: *Do you believe the South Moluccans should be placed under strict surveillance, even though our country might then somewhat resemble a police state?* (July 1977)

In favor of strict surveillance	62%
Opposed to strict surveillance	33
No opinion	5

Do you feel that terrorists such as hijackers of trains and members of the German Baader-Meinhof group should have the same rights as other arrested suspects in our country, or do you believe they are not entitled to such rights? (Oct. 1977*)

	Same Rights as Other Suspects	*Cannot Claim Equal Rights*	*No Answer*
All	49%	44%	7%
Women	48	43	9
Men	50	46	4

Do you think that extra stern and harsh action should be taken against such terrorists, or should they be dealt with in the same manner as other criminals?

	Extra Stern, Harsh Action	*Same as Other Criminals*	*No Answer*
All	73%	21%	6%
Women	72	20	8
Men	73	23	4

West Germany—DMS: *The trial at Stammheim of the terrorists Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe was recently completed. What is your impression: Do you feel it was generally a fair trial, that is, did the prisoners and their lawyers have every opportunity for a proper defense, or were they hindered in any way?* (May 1977)

Fair trial	60%
Defense obstructed	10
Impossible to say	30

If the influence of the state and the police has to be strengthened in order to combat terrorism, would you go along with limitations of your personal rights by such measures as surveillance and house searches, or would you reject this?

	May 1975	*Feb. 1978**						
	All	*All*	*Men*	*Women*	*16–29 Years*	*30–44 Years*	*45–59 Years*	*60 and Over*
Would accept	69	62	60	64	51	67	63	67
Would reject	21	26	30	22	36	23	25	19
Undecided; no opinion	10	12	10	14	13	10	12	14

In the discussion of effective ways of fighting terrorism, the question is raised whether the conversations between the accused and their lawyers should be supervised. Some are against supervision because they feel it is part of a fair trial to enable a prisoner to talk confidentially with his lawyer. Others are for supervising conversations with the defense as they feel this is the best way of preventing new acts of terrorism from being organized in and from the prison. How do you feel about this? (May 1977)

For supervision of the defense	64%
Against supervision	22
Undecided	14

West Germany—EMNID: *After the suicides of terrorists in several penitentiaries, it is being considered to have the cells of the terrorists constantly watched. Some people are in favor of this measure in order to prevent further suicides, others oppose it because it would offend human dignity. Which of these views comes closest to your own feeling?* (Nov./Dec. 1977*)

		Age				
	Total	*14–19*	*20–29*	*30–49*	*50–64*	*65 and Over*
Keep under constant observation so as to prevent further suicides	54%	46%	51%	53%	59%	57%
No constant observation, as it offends human dignity	44	51	45	45	39	40
No answer	3	3	4	2	2	4

The Role of the News Media

USA—AIPO: *Some people say the news media place too much emphasis on the reporting of terrorism such as kidnapings, the holding of hostages, and the like. Others say that such reporting is necessary to keep people fully informed. Which point of view comes closest to your own opinion on this issue?* (April 1977*)

	Terrorism Is Overemphasized	*Public Should Be Made Aware*	*No Opinion*
National	47%	50%	3%
Men	51	46	3
Women	43	54	3
Whites	50	48	2
Nonwhites	24	67	9
Under 30	37	61	2
30–49	55	42	3
50 and over	48	48	4

Do you think news media coverage of terrorism encourages others to commit these acts, or not? (April 1977*)

	Yes	*No*	*No Opinion*
National	64%	27%	9%
College	71	21	8
High school	65	28	7
Grade school	52	33	15

West Germany—DMS: *A few days after Schleyer was kidnapped, the Federal Government imposed a news embargo. Very generally speaking, do you agree or disagree with this news embargo?* (Sept. 1977)

Agree	77%
Disagree	13
Undecided, no answer	10

Sympathizers

West Germany—DMS: *Some people say that one has to be careful nowadays in the Federal Republic with what one says; one always has to be afraid of being misunderstood and of being at once suspected of sympathizing with the terrorists. Do you think that is correct, or wouldn't you say so?* (Jan. 1978*)

Disagree	67%
Is correct	21
Undecided	12

Do you believe the sympathizers come from all ranks of society, or are there certain ranks or circles which are close to the terrorists? (Jan. 1978*)

From all ranks of population	47%
Certain ranks of circles	43
Don't know	10

What are the circles you believe the sympathizers mainly come from; that is, where do the terrorists especially find their aiders and abetters? Could you tell me on the basis of this list? (Only asked when the answer to the previous question was "certain ranks or circles." Jan. 1978*)

Students	38%
Lawyers	32
Communists	23
College professors	18
Authors	12
Rightist radicals, former Nazis	10
Young Socialists	9
Teachers	8
Artists, actors	7
Journalists	7
Certain groups in the Socialist Party	6
Labor unions	2
Certain groups in the Liberal Party	2
Nobody from these circles	1
	(multiple answers)

In the newspapers and on television a great deal is now being said about the so-called sympathetic environment of the terrorists, but the question is who should be counted among the sympathizers and who shouldn't. Let me read a few examples to you. Would you please tell me for each if such a person, in your opinion, is or is not a sympathizer. (Jan. 1978*)

A sympathizer is:

Somebody who gives shelter to a terrorist in his home	95%
Somebody who recognizes a terrorist but doesn't report him to the police	73
Somebody who gives money, like the people who contributed to the dental treatment for Gudrun Ensslin	68
Somebody who makes endeavors toward getting prison conditions for terrorists alleviated	67
A person who feels pity for the terrorists because he believes them to perpetrate these crimes out of sheer despair	56
A person who considers the terrorists' criticism of our society justified in some respects	36
A person who believes the lawyers should have the right at all times to visit the terrorists in prison	29
A person who does not wish the death penalty introduced for terrorists	18
None of these	2
	(multiple answers)

POPQAE 43(4) 443–600 (1979)
ISSN 0033-362X

A0610-1

Public Opinion Quarterly

The Subjective Meaning of Social Class Identification in the United States *Mary R. Jackman*

Changes in White Attitudes Toward Blacks: 1963–1977 *John G. Condran*

Probability Sampling with Quotas: An Experiment *C. Bruce Stephenson*

Protecting Research Subjects and Unintended Consequences: The Effect of Guarantees of Confidentiality *Frederic G. Reamer*

A Longitudinal Test of the Selective Exposure Hypothesis *Michael A. Milburn*

Canonical Correlation as an Exploratory Technique of Attitude Scale Construction *James C. Wendt*

THE POLLS: Public Attitudes Toward the Energy Crisis *Al Richman*

CURRENT RESEARCH • NEWS AND NOTES
BOOK REVIEWS • INDEX

WINTER 1979

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

The Public Opinion Quarterly

ORGAN OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH
EDITORIALLY SPONSORED BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION
ALLEN BARTON W. PHILLIPS DAVISON HARVEY C. MANSFIELD
ROBERT K. MERTON FREDERICK T. C. YU

Editor: ELEANOR SINGER *Managing Editor:* INA C. JAEGER
Department Editors: *Editorial Assistants:*
PHILIP A. HARDING, *News and Notes* LAURA VALLENSTEIN
MARC B. GLASSMAN, *Book Reviews* NANCY JALET

EDITORIAL BOARD

LEO BOGART
STEVEN R. BROWN
ROBERT O. CARLSON
STEVEN H. CHAFFEE
STEVEN M. COHEN
PHILIP E. CONVERSE
JAMES A. DAVIS
MARTIN R. FRANKEL
HERBERT J. GANS
NORVAL D. GLENN
JOHN HAMMOND
EUGENE L. HARTLEY
MATHEW HAUCK
HERBERT H. HYMAN
ELIHU KATZ
JOSEPH T. KLAPPER
HERBERT E. KRUGMAN
EVERETT LADD
KENNETH C. LAND
GLADYS ENGEL LANG
NATHAN MACCOBY
HERBERT MCCLOSKY
WILLIAM J. MCGUIRE
JOHN P. ROBINSON
HOWARD SCHUMAN
SEYMOUR SUDMAN
CAROL H. WEISS
CHARLES R. WRIGHT

JUNE CHRIST, *AAPOR Representative*

Volume #43, 4 issues (1979)

© 1979 The Trustees of Columbia University. Published quarterly by Elsevier North Holland, Inc. New York. Second-class postage paid at New York, New York and at additional mailing offices. Institutional subscription price per year $25.00 (Volume #43, 1979). Individual subscription for subscriber's own personal use $13.00 (payment must accompany order). Foreign subscribers must add an additional $4.00 per volume for postage (surface mail) and handling, $10.00 for Air Mail to Europe and Canada, $16.00 for Air Mail outside the U.S., Canada, or Europe.

Mail orders and direct subscription information to:
Michael Torzewski
Subscription Department
Elsevier North Holland, Inc.
52 Vanderbilt Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Single copy and back volume information furnished upon written request. Claims for missing issues can be honored only up to three months from date of issue. Indexed by Public Affairs Information Services, Social Sciences Index, United States Political Science Documents, and Combined Retrospective Index Sets (CRIS).

PUBLICATION NUMBER 449380

Editorial Office: Journalism Building, Columbia University 116th Street and Broadway, New York, New York 10027
Business, Subscriptions, Back Issues: Elsevier North Holland, Inc. 52 Vanderbilt Avenue New York, New York 10017
AAPOR: Post Office Box 17, Princeton, New Jersey 08540
Subscribers and members of AAPOR are urged to notify the Subscription Office as soon as possible of changes of address. In doing so, give the old as well as the new address.

PUBLISHED BY ELSEVIER NORTH HOLLAND, INC.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

The Public Opinion Quarterly

VOLUME 43 WINTER 1979 NUMBER 4

The Subjective Meaning of Social Class Identification in the United States *Mary R. Jackman* 443

Changes in White Attitudes Toward Blacks: 1963–1977 *John G. Condran* 463

Probability Sampling with Quotas: An Experiment *C. Bruce Stephenson* 477

Protecting Research Subjects and Unintended Consequences: The Effect of Guarantees of Confidentiality *Frederic G. Reamer* 497

A Longitudinal Test of the Selective Exposure Hypothesis *Michael A. Milburn* 507

Canonical Correlation as an Exploratory Technique of Attitude Scale Construction *James C. Wendt* 518

CURRENT RESEARCH

Presidential Popularity and Presidential Elections *Lee Sigelman* 532

Perceived Economic Competency and the Ford/Carter Election *Jeffrey W. Wides* 535

The Validity of the Randomized Response Technique *S. M. Zdep, Isabelle N. Rhodes, R. M. Schwarz, and Mary J. Kilkenny* 544

Different Settings, Different Results? A Comparison of School and Home Responses *Anne Zanes and Euthemia Matsoukas* 550

Gaining Respondent Cooperation in Mail Surveys Through Prior Commitment *Terry L. Childers and Steven J. Skinner* 558

Computerized Conferencing for Opinion Research *Starr Roxanne Hiltz* 562

NEWS AND NOTES *Philip A. Harding* 572

THE POLLS: Public Attitudes Toward the Energy Crisis *Al Richman* 576

BOOK REVIEWS

Stephen E. Fienberg, *The Analysis of Cross-Classified Categorical Data*, and H. T. Reynolds, *The Analysis of Cross-Classifications* *Herbert M. Kritzer* 586

John L. Hammond, *The Politics of Benevolence: Revival Religion and American Voting Behavior* *Charles Y. Glock* 587

Barry B. Hughes, *The Domestic Context of American Foreign Policy* *Bernard Roshco* 589

George Gerbner, ed., *Mass Media Policies in Changing Cultures* *Godwin C. Chu* 590

BOOK NOTES *Marc B. Glassman* 592

INDEX TO VOLUME 43 593

◆

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

Authors should submit two copies of their articles and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope if they wish them returned. Bibliographic references, footnotes, and tables should be typed to conform to the printed style of this journal. Authors are urged to consult recent issues before submitting articles.

Manuscripts should not be submitted if they are currently under review elsewhere in the same or substantially the same form.

Upon acceptance of an article by the journal, the author(s) will be asked to transfer copyright in the article to the publisher. This transfer will insure the widest possible dissemination of information under the U.S. Copyright Law.

The PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY is hospitable to all points of view, provided that the material presented will help to illuminate problems of communication and public opinion. The American Association for Public Opinion Research assumes responsibility only for material signed by an officer of the Association in his official capacity. Statements of fact and opinion are made on the responsibility of the authors alone and do not represent the views of the editors.

The Subjective Meaning of Social Class Identification in the United States

MARY R. JACKMAN

TERMS such as *poor, working class, middle class, upper middle class,* and *upper class* are routinely used to make analytic distinctions in both journalistic and scholarly literature. Concern with these distinctions is reflected in the repeated use of items in public opinion surveys that ask Americans to identify with a social class. However, some analysts have argued that social class terms have no intrinsic

---

Abstract This paper assesses the significance and meaning to Americans of five common social class terms: poor, working class, middle class, upper middle class, and upper class. After respondents in a national survey had been asked with which of these five classes they identified, they were asked how they would assign various occupations to the classes and what criteria they used to define membership in their own class. Most respondents were able to assign a variety of occupations to social classes with little or no hesitation, and there was high agreement about the class location of occupations. The prevailing class assignments of those occupations reflect hierarchical socioeconomic characteristics (such as income, job authority, education, and skill) rather than a qualitative blue-collar/white-collar distinction. Finally, the criteria that respondents selected as important in defining the social class with which they identify suggest that class is at least as much a social as an economic phenomenon in the United States.

Mary R. Jackman is Associate Professor of Sociology and Faculty Associate in the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan. This research was supported by grants from the National Institute for Mental Health (MH-26433) and the National Science Foundation (SOC 75-00405). The author is indebted to Mary Scheuer Senter for her invaluable help in the preparation of the questionnaire and in all subsequent stages of the research from data management to commenting on early drafts of the paper. Suzanne Purcell and Leslie Eveland also provided indispensable assistance with data management and analysis. Finally, thanks go to several people for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper: Richard Centers, William A. Gamson, Gerald Gurin, Joan Huber, Robert W. Jackman, and Howard Schuman.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1979 by The Trustees of Columbia University
Published by Elsevier North-Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/79/0043-443/$1.75

meaning for many or most Americans (e.g., Case, 1955; Haer, 1957). Such critics have contended that the common reliance on closed-ended class identification items "puts words in the respondent's mouth" and thus masks widespread confusion about and disinterest in class (e.g., Gross, 1953; Haer, 1957). The importance of this issue is underscored by the increasing prominence of the more general view that social class is of dwindling significance in advanced industrial societies (e.g., Rosenberg, 1953; Wilensky, 1966; Nisbet, 1970; Bell, 1973). Despite these arguments about the diminishing salience of class, survey analysts have continued to use class identification items without addressing the meaning of the items themselves. Indeed, Centers (1949) remains the only direct inquiry into how Americans interpret standard class terms, and his classic study is by now 30 years old.

This paper seeks to expand and update Centers' analysis by investigating two key aspects of the way Americans interpret some commonly used social class terms—*poor, working class, middle class, upper middle class*, and *upper class*.[1] In a national survey, respondents were probed about their answers to a closed-ended class identification item with questions on their conceptions of how occupations are affiliated with the classes and on their broader definitions of criteria for membership in their own social class. These data address important issues about the subjective meaning of Americans' social class identification on two levels: the degree of clarity or confusion in popular conceptions of standard social class terms, and the substance of the public's understanding of these class terms.

Occupation has traditionally been regarded as a key element of socioeconomic status: an evaluation of how Americans assign occupations to classes constitutes a basic step in assessing their understanding of social class terms. If the terms used in class identification questions are as meaningless to the mass public as some investigators have argued, we would expect respondents to waver a good deal in trying to assign occupations to classes and to express widely varying ideas about the class location of occupations. On the other hand, a ready consensus about the social class placement of different occupations would suggest that class is relatively well defined in the public's awareness. The data in this paper suggest that portrayals of social class as a vague, irrelevant, distant concept to the American public are off the mark: substantial agreement exists about the class location of various occupations. However, the amount of agreement varies across occupations, and this variation provides insight into those areas of the occupational structure that are less clearly defined.

---

[1] Probing into respondents' interpretations of response options in closed-ended questionnaire items has been recommended by Schuman (1966) as a general strategy whenever there is doubt about the validity and meaning of survey responses.

Beyond the basic issue of whether social class terms have any common meaning lies the question of the form that such meaning takes. This paper probes that form in two ways. First, the data on the class assignment of occupations are re-examined to assess the rules that appear to underly the way occupations are assigned to classes. Particularly important here is the degree of popular sensitivity to the qualitative blue-collar/white-collar distinction versus socioeconomic hierarchies based on income, status, job authority, skill, or level of education. Theorists of "postindustrial society" have argued that the relative increase in the size of the white-collar sector implies an expanding middle class and a decline in class divisions (e.g., Bell, 1973). This argument would be weakened, however, if people were found to be more sensitive to socioeconomic hierarchies other than the blue-collar/white-collar dichotomy, since it is among lower level white-collar jobs that the expansion has been greatest. In fact, Centers (1949) argued that such routine white-collar work was becoming "proletarianized." The data in this paper suggest that the blue-collar/white-collar criterion is of limited significance in the way occupations are sorted into classes: the prevailing pattern suggests more attention to alternative socioeconomic hierarchies.

The second way we probe Americans' interpretations of their class identification is by examining the kinds of criteria they use in defining membership in their own social class. The central issue here is whether class membership is seen strictly in terms of shared objective characteristics, such as type of occupation or income, or whether it extends to encompass cultural/expressive characteristics, such as shared lifestyle or beliefs and feelings. The former pattern would suggest that class is defined somewhat narrowly, conforming more to the Weberian notion of class as an economic category only (Weber, 1946). However, the latter conception would make class membership a more significant *social* affiliation, suggesting that class incorporates the Weberian description of a status group. It would also be more consistent with the Marxist and interest-group conception of class as both a social and an economic unit (Centers, 1949; Marx, 1964). The data in this paper suggest that it is the latter conception that better reflects Americans' interpretations of their class identification.

Centers' survey of American white males, conducted in 1945, provides important baseline data on the subjective meaning of social class identification. Comparison with data from the present study, gathered 30 years later, is complicated by differences in the samples (the present study does not exclude women or blacks) and in the wording of the items (the present items are an extension of those used by Centers). However, some interesting comparisons between the two time points are possible. After briefly describing the data base in the present study, we turn to the questions of whether, and how, Americans associate occupations with classes, and their broader conceptions of the important factors in determining membership in their own subjective social class.

Data

The data for this study come from a national probability survey of adults aged eighteen and over living in the contiguous United States. The survey was conducted in the fall of 1975 by the Survey Research Center of the Institute for Social Research in Ann Arbor, Michigan.[2] The study included personal interviews with 1,914 respondents.

The series of questions about class that are the subject of this paper appeared early in the interview schedule, and were introduced by a class identification item:

> People talk about social classes such as the poor, the working class, the middle class, the upper middle class, and the upper class. Which of these classes would you say you belong to?

The class terms in this question are all commonly used in both journalistic and scholarly literature. They also conform with those most generally used in class identification items, with the exception of the term *poor* (rather than *lower class*) for the lowest category. While the term *lower class* has been frequently used in class identification items, it is rarely used in other discussions of class, and its popular usage is more likely to be as a pejorative adjective than as a label for a socioeconomic group. On the other hand, the poor constitute a socioeconomic category that is frequently discussed and is the object of long-standing public policy concern.

All but 3.3 percent of the respondents identified with one of the five classes:[3] 7.6 percent identified with the poor, 36.6 percent with the working class, 43.3 percent with the middle class, 8.2 percent with the upper middle class, and 1.0 percent with the upper class. The only notable deviation in this distribution of responses from those usually obtained with other closed-ended class identification items is the 7.6 percent identifying with the poor, rather than the 1 to 3 percent who generally identify with the lower class.[4] This doubtless reflects the perception of the term *poor* as both less odious and more relevant than *lower class*. The subjective salience of people's responses to this class identification question may be judged by the fact that one-half of the sample said they felt "very strongly" about their class identification, and almost 80 percent felt at least somewhat strongly.[5]

---

[2] The data were collected as part of a larger study on intergroup attitudes and group consciousness among race, gender, and social class groups. The response rate for the survey was just under 70 percent.

[3] The response rate of the 3.3 percent who did not identify with one of the classes can be broken down as follows: 1.3 percent gave other responses, 0.5 percent denied the existence of class, 1.5 percent said "don't know," and 0.2 percent were not ascertained. In response to the question, "Was there any indication that R misunderstood or had problems understanding the class terms in the class identification question?" interviewers indicated that only a few respondents (14 percent) had any problems.

In a rudimentary model linking class identification to respondent's education, head of household's socioeconomic status, and family income, regression estimates are comparable to those obtained in earlier studies (e.g., Jackman and Jackman, 1973), and the three variables account for approximately one-quarter of the variance in class identification. The average objective status characteristics of the classes (respondent's educational attainment, head of household's socioeconomic status, and family income) increase steadily from the poor through the upper middle class, but dip for the upper class. This underscores the unreliability of any inferences based on the upper-class identifiers (who constitute only 19 individuals). At the same time, it suggests that the measure of class identification in this survey enjoys a relationship with objective status that is comparable to that found in other studies. We turn now to the question of the subjective meaning of the class terms used in this item.

Analysis

PERCEIVED CLASS LOCATION OF OCCUPATIONS: AGREEMENT OR DISAGREEMENT?

Occupation is of central significance to social class. The readiness with which people assign occupations to classes and the amount of agreement they express in the way they do it bear fundamentally on the meaningfulness and salience of class among the American public. A wide inability to associate occupations with classes or a broad divergence in views of the class location of various occupations would seriously undercut the importance of class as an element in the public's consciousness. This would, of course, be consistent with the prominent argument that class is of little significance or relevance to most Americans (e.g., Rosenberg, 1953; Case, 1955; Haer, 1957; Wilensky, 1966; Nisbet, 1970; Bell, 1973). However, the data in this study do not support such an argument. Instead, they suggest that social class is a familiar concept to most Americans, and that significant agreement exists on the basic issue of how occupations are associated with classes.

---

[4] For example, the proportions identifying with the lower, working, middle, upper middle, and upper classes are 2.3 percent, 34.3 percent, 44 percent, 16.6 percent, and 2.2 percent, respectively, in one 1964 NORC survey (Hodge and Treiman, 1968); and 2.7 percent, 37.0 percent, 45.3 percent, 10.8 percent, and 2.3 percent, respectively, in another 1964 NORC survey (Jackman and Jackman, 1973:582).

[5] These results are similar to those reported by Centers (1956) for a representative sample of Americans interviewed in 1950; if anything, feelings of class identity appear just slightly stronger in the present data. Centers reported that 34 percent expressed "very strong" feelings and 37 percent "fairly strong" feelings about their class identification.

Centers (1949) sought to isolate people's occupational definitions of their own subjective class by asking respondents to select from a list of 11 occupation groups those that they thought belonged to the class with which they identified. In the present study, this list was extended by giving respondents an "occupation-class sort board," with 12 occupation cards to be sorted among the 5 classes. This procedure provides data not only on respondents' perceptions of the occupations belonging to their own class, but also on their images of the match between occupations and classes throughout the class structure.

The occupation-class sort board was introduced by the interviewer as follows:

> There is sometimes disagreement about what social classes people with different occupations belong to. Each of these cards has a group of occupations on it. Please look at this board with a slot for each of the social classes we have been talking about, and sort each card into the slot you think it belongs to.

In constructing the 12 occupation cards, the main concern was to represent the major occupational categories of the civilian labor force with occupational titles that would be widely recognized by a cross-sectional sample of Americans. The occupations on the 12 cards are listed in Table 1. They were not presented to the respondent in any fixed order, but they represent a broad range of prestige, income, skill, and job authority—from "migrant farm workers" to "corporation directors and presidents." In addition, different cards represent the blue-collar/white-collar distinction (e.g., "assembly-line factory workers" and "workers in offices and stores"), as well as the professional/business distinction (e.g., "doctors and lawyers" and "corporation directors and presidents").

Most respondents completed the occupation-class sort board with little or no hesitation, and very few "don't know" responses were

Table 1. Social Class Assignment of Occupations, with Predominant Choices Italicized

	Social Class Assigned						
Occupations	*Poor*	*Working*	*Middle*	*Upper Middle*	*Upper*	*Don't Know*	*Base N*
Migrant farm workers	*73.3%*	21.7%	2.2%	0.5%	0.5%	1.7%	1,846
Janitors	25.2	*66.6*	6.1	0.5	0.2	1.4	1,840
Assembly-line factory workers	5.0	*75.1*	16.0	1.7	0.7	1.6	1,862
Workers in offices and stores	1.5	*59.9*	33.4	3.4	0.8	1.0	1,843
Plumbers and carpenters	1.1	*43.9*	*40.0*	11.7	1.9	1.3	1,853
Foremen in factories	0.6	*39.5*	*47.7*	9.7	1.0	1.5	1,857
Schoolteachers and social workers	0.4	18.7	*59.7*	17.4	2.5	1.2	1,858
Small businessmen	1.7	17.6	*60.5*	17.7	1.2	1.3	1,859
Supervisors in offices and stores	0.1	16.7	*56.2*	22.5	3.2	1.3	1,853
Business executives and managers	0.1	3.0	13.8	*55.8*	25.7	1.6	1,861
Doctors and lawyers	0.0	1.8	3.9	35.6	*57.1*	1.7	1,866
Corporation directors and presidents	0.4	1.3	3.0	21.5	*71.8*	1.9	1,852

elicited by any of the occupations. In a structured question, interviewers were asked to report how much the respondent hesitated on the sort-board task: they were instructed to look for such signs of uncertainty as switching cards from one slot to another or taking a while to decide where to place each card. According to the interviewers' observations, fewer than 7 percent of the respondents hesitated "a lot" on the task, while 11 percent hesitated "quite a bit"; over 50 percent did not hesitate at all, and an additional 31 percent hesitated no more than "a little." The small proportion of "don't know" responses (less than 2 percent for any occupation) is consistent with the interviewers' observations.[6]

Beyond the issue of the ease and familiarity with which Americans associate occupations with classes, the data in Table 1 display a striking amount of popular agreement about how occupations are associated with classes. For all but two occupations (plumbers and carpenters, and foremen in factories), a single class location is selected by a clear majority of respondents. For 6 of the 12 occupations, one contiguous class absorbs almost all the other responses, while with the other occupations, most of the remaining responses are absorbed by two contiguous classes. This amount of agreement is especially noteworthy given the loose specification of some of the occupational categories. Because the occupational titles had to be sufficiently colloquial to be familiar to a cross-section of the population, many of the titles inevitably encompass some internal variance in prestige, job authority, educational attainment, and income. Thus, the convergence of class assignments in Table 1 is probably as strong as could reasonably be expected.

---

[6] This is also consistent with pretest interviewers' reports that respondents enjoyed the sort board task and completed it without apparent difficulty. Note, further, that the missing data on the sort board derive predominantly from interviewers' errors in recording responses, rather than from respondent refusals.

The level of agreement about the class location of different occupations seems to vary as a function of three factors that are not entirely separable in these data. Disagreement increases with occupations (1) that are in the middle, as opposed to the top or the bottom of the hierarchy, (2) that encompass more internal variance in socioeconomic characteristics, and (3) that present conflicting cues for class classification.

The three occupations that generate the most agreement in class assignments are migrant farm workers, corporation directors and presidents, and assembly-line factory workers. Each of these occupations is placed in a single class (the poor, the upper class, and the working class, respectively) by about three-quarters of the respondents. Migrant farm workers and corporation directors and presidents mark the two extremes of the class categories, and perhaps this contributes to the high agreement about their class location. This interpretation is supported by the fact that all six occupations that generate the highest agreement are at the bottom or top of the list in Table 1. Since the occupation cards were not presented to respondents in any fixed order, this suggests that there is more spontaneous consensus about the class location of occupations with clear low or high status, and more disagreement about occupation-class images in the intermediate range.

However, the two occupation cards at either end of the list are also relatively homogeneous in terms of socioeconomic status, job authority, and type of work, and so these cards constitute less ambiguous stimuli. In this connection, note that doctors and lawyers, about whom there is less agreement than about corporation directors and presidents, constitute a less homogeneous group than the latter: an equivalent elite subgroup of doctors and lawyers might be top surgeons in major hospitals and senior corporation lawyers in large law firms. Assembly-line factory workers—one of the three occupation groups about which there is the highest agreement—constitute a reasonably broad range of SEI scores, but present a straightforward stimulus in terms of type of work and level of job authority. There appears to be a common conception that relatively unskilled, low authority, blue-collar work which is organized in group settings should be included in the working class. There is less consensus that workers in offices and stores belong in the working class. Apart from the blue-collar/white-collar distinction between this group and the previous one, office/store workers constitute a slightly broader range of occupations in terms of type of work (e.g., secretaries, office clerks, typists, sales clerks) and individual task discretion.

Turning to the six occupation cards about which there is less agreement (plumbers and carpenters through business executives and managers), we find that not only do these occupations fall in the middle of the list but also that each of these cards presents a more ambiguous stimulus by including multiple occupations, authority levels, education/skill levels, incomes, and/or SEI scores. Each of these cards has considerable internal variance on at least three of those five dimensions. Plumbers and carpenters have similar NORC Prestige scores, but the SEI score for carpenters is about half that for plumbers. In addition, the title "carpenters" may be interpreted as skilled tradesmen with wide individual task discretion or group-organized construction workers. Schoolteachers and social workers have similar Prestige and SEI scores, but each title incorporates considerable variation in terms of job authority, educational level, and income. Small businessmen encompass a broad range from marginal economic ventures with the owner as the sole employee to fairly prosperous businesses with several employees: the term captures wide variation in terms of occupations, incomes, education/skill levels, and sphere of authority. Both foremen in factories and office/store supervisors also represent multiple occupations, authority levels, levels of skill or education, and incomes. Business executives and managers represent considerable variation in terms of level and scope of authority, income, and education.

The two occupation cards that generate the most disagreement, in that they were assigned almost equally to two classes, are plumbers and carpenters, and foremen in factories. They are the only two occupation cards that represent skilled blue-collar work, and the assignments of both are split between the working class and the middle class. This doubtless reflects popular disagreement about the importance of the blue-collar criterion versus average job authority, skill level, and income in distinguishing working-class from middle-class occupations.

The data in Table 2 are helpful in trying to assess the sources of agreement and disagreement about the class location of occupations.

Table 2. Percentage Assigning Each Occupation to Their Own Subjective Class, by Subjective Class, with Predominant Choices Italicized

	Social Class				
Occupations	*Poor*[a]	*Working*[b]	*Middle*[c]	*Upper Middle*[d]	*Upper*[e]
Migrant farm workers	*71.9%*	25.4%	3.1%	0.7%	5.6%
Janitors	48.2	*69.6*	9.2	1.3	0.0
Assembly-line factory workers	16.5	*80.6*	20.0	3.9	5.6
Workers in offices and stores	7.4	*71.2*	42.0	5.3	0.0
Plumbers and carpenters	3.6	*52.5*	*47.2*	12.0	0.0
Foremen in factories	2.2	*48.4*	*53.5*	15.7	5.6
Schoolteachers and social workers	1.4	33.4	*71.8*	25.3	0.0
Small businessmen	9.4	28.9	*67.9*	31.8	0.0
Supervisors in offices and stores	0.0	26.3	*63.9*	32.9	5.6
Business executives and managers	0.0	4.8	12.1	*69.1*	29.4
Doctors and lawyers	0.0	3.3	2.8	45.8	*82.4*
Corporation directors and presidents	2.2	2.0	2.8	19.0	*76.5*

[a] Base N for Poor ranges from 136 to 139.
[b] Base N for Working Class ranges from 682 to 690.
[c] Base N for Middle Class ranges from 802 to 817.
[d] Base N for Upper Middle Class ranges from 150 to 154.
[e] Base N for Upper Class ranges from 17 to 18.

This table reports the percentage of each subjective class assigning each of the occupation groups to their own class. Note, first, that the pattern of prevailing class placements remains the same in Table 2 as in Table 1. That is, the class to which an occupation card is predominantly assigned by respondents as a whole is also the class most likely to claim that occupation. Second, disagreements in Table 1 tend to be reflected in Table 2, in that disputed occupations are more likely to be claimed by each of the classes involved than they are to be assigned to that class by respondents as a whole. Thus, occupations with the widest spread in class assignments in Table 1 tend to be "overclaimed" by the most classes in Table 2. Three of the occupation cards whose assignments are spread over three classes in Table 1 (schoolteachers and social workers, office/store supervisors, and small businessmen) are overclaimed by all three classes in Table 2. Small businessmen are also slightly overclaimed by a fourth class, the poor. This pattern of results supports the interpretation that disagreements about the class location of occupations derive substantially from within-occupation variance in education, income, job authority, task discretion, and skill: respondents identifying with different social classes are likely to use different levels of occupation titles as their reference in completing the occupation-class sort board.

OCCUPATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND SOCIAL CLASS: PREVAILING PERCEPTIONS

I turn now to an examination of the prevailing class assignments of the 12 occupation cards. Although each card encompasses some internal variance in socioeconomic characteristics, this analysis is useful in trying to assess the rules that seem to underly the way occupations are associated with classes. A question of particular significance is the degree of popular sensitivity to the blue-collar/white-collar distinction versus socioeconomic hierarchies based on income, status, education, skill, or authority.

The blue-collar/white-collar dichotomy has frequently been treated by students of social class as synonymous with the working-class/middle-class distinction. The advent of the Duncan Socioeconomic Index (Duncan, 1961) and the NORC Prestige Scale (Siegel, 1971) led to some diminution of emphasis on the blue-collar/white-collar dichotomy, since it does not accurately reflect differences in SEI and Prestige scores. Of course, it had been argued much earlier that lower level white-collar work was undergoing gradual routinization and proletarianization (Centers, 1949:82–85; Mills, 1956). Work by Laumann (1966) further discouraged emphasis on the blue-collar/white-collar distinction: he found no significant difference between people's feelings of social distance toward the lower level white-collar occupation of sales clerks and the blue-collar occupations of machine operator in a factory or truck driver (1966:59). Use of SEI and Prestige scores brought more attention not only to the notion of occupational status, independent of whether the work was manual or nonmanual, but also to the average educational attainment and income associated with occupations. Job authority is an additional occupational characteristic that has been stressed as an important aspect of class (Dahrendorf, 1959; Wright and Perrone, 1977; Robinson and Kelley, 1979).

The blue-collar/white-collar distinction has recently been revived, however, as an indicator of working-class or middle-class membership (Dalia and Guest, 1975; Vanneman and Pampel, 1977). In addition, the relative increase in the size of the white-collar sector makes the assessment of respondents' sensitivity to the blue-collar/white-collar dichotomy especially important. Although most of this increase has taken place in lower level white-collar jobs, it has been interpreted by theorists of "postindustrial society" as an expansion of the middle class with a subsequent increase in societal well-being and decrease in the probability of class conflict (e.g., Bell, 1973).

Of particular relevance to the blue-collar/white-collar issue are the class assignments of five occupation cards: assembly-line factory workers, workers in offices and stores, plumbers and carpenters, foremen in factories, and supervisors in offices and stores. The first two occupation groups provide the blue- and white-collar counterparts of routine work with low responsibility, although assembly-line factory workers constitute a more homogeneous group and have somewhat lower mean SEI and Prestige scores than workers in offices and stores. The predominant assignment of both occupations is to the working class, although this is done with more agreement for factory workers. Skilled blue-collar occupations with more responsibility (plumbers and carpenters, and foremen in factories) are more likely than routine white-collar jobs to be associated with the middle class. Recall, however, that skilled blue-collar occupations are the only ones that generated pronounced disagreement about their class affiliation. Clearly, some people have difficulty associating even skilled blue-collar jobs with anything other than the working class. On the other hand, routine white-collar work (where most of the white-collar expansion has taken place) generally receives a somewhat lower class affiliation than skilled blue-collar work: in the majority view, the fact that an occupation is nonmanual is insufficient in itself to make it middle class. Supervisors in offices and stores might be seen as the white-collar counterparts of foremen in factories, in terms of line of command on the job, although their equivalence on other socioeconomic characteristics is hard to assess because they are not given separate titles in the census occupational classification: their class assignment tends to be somewhat higher than factory foremen.

The blue-collar/white-collar distinction appears to play, at best, a limited role in the way occupations are associated with classes. Its clearest effect seems to be in lowering the class assignment some people give to skilled blue-collar occupations, rather than in raising the class affiliation of routine white-collar work. A comparison can be made with some of Centers' data as a way of evaluating his argument that routine white-collar work was gradually becoming increasingly proletarianized (1949: 78–85). Centers' data are for white males only, he employed a different class classification (lower, working, middle, and upper), most of his occupational titles are dissimilar to those in the present study, and he measured only the assignment of occupations to the respondent's own subjective class. Within these constraints, we can compare (a) the proportion of the white male members of the working and middle classes, respectively, who place "factory workers" and "office workers" in their own class in the 1945 survey, with (b) the proportion of the white male identifiers with each of those classes in the 1975 survey who claim "assembly-line factory workers" and "workers in offices and stores" for their own class. The proportions claiming factory workers/assembly-line factory workers are very similar at the two time points (82 percent of the working class and 24 percent of the middle class in 1945, versus 84 percent and 21 percent of the two respective classes in 1975). However, the proportions claiming office workers/workers in offices and stores are substantially different at the two time points: 48 percent of the working class and 53 percent of the middle class in 1945, versus 76 percent of the working class and 36 percent of the middle class males in 1975. Although these data should be interpreted with caution, they lend support to Centers' argument that lower level white-collar occupations were acquiring an increasingly working-class affiliation.

The prevailing class assignments of all 12 occupation cards appear to reflect primarily their average socioeconomic characteristics, rather than whether they are blue collar or white collar. In Table 1, the occupation groups are listed in approximate ascending order according to their prevailing class assignments, and this ordering is eminently reasonable in terms of the prestige, educational attainment or skill, income, and sphere of authority associated with those occupations. The fact that migrant farm workers are the only occupational group that is placed in the poor by a majority of respondents suggests that this social class is predominantly reserved for marginal occupations which provide irregular employment. Occupations that are predominantly assigned to the working class appear to be characterized by low job authority (whether blue collar or white collar), low skill, and low socioeconomic status. Skilled blue-collar jobs are split more or less evenly between the working class and the middle class. Occupations that are predominantly placed in the middle class are white-collar jobs with moderate job authority, lower level professionals, and the petty bourgeoisie. The prevailing assignment of upper level (but not top level) positions in business is to the upper middle class. Occupations that are predominantly placed in the upper class are elite positions at the topmost level of big business, and (with less agreement) top-level professionals.

CRITERIA FOR CLASS MEMBERSHIP

The way that people define membership in their own class provides an important insight into their interpretation of social class. Especially significant is the extent to which people define their class narrowly in terms of objective factors or more broadly to include cultural/expressive factors as well. Weber reserved the term *status group* to denote a collectivity with a shared lifestyle and set of values, and he distinguished status groups from classes by defining the latter solely in terms of common economic fate (Weber, 1946). Marxist and interest-group perspectives have maintained that this distinction is false and that classes are, indeed, *social* as much as economic collectivities (e.g., Marx, 1964; Centers, 1949; Portes, 1971). All parties agree, of course, that without the social component, class is robbed of its political significance.

Centers (1949) pursued the question of how Americans conceive of their subjective class by excluding occupation and asking respondents, "In deciding whether a person belongs to your class or not, which of these other things is most important to know: who his family is, how much money he has, what sort of education he has, or how he believes and feels about certain things?" Respondents could name more than one criterion. His results suggested that the cultural/expressive aspect of class is subjectively more important than any of the others: 47 percent of his white male respondents named "how he believes and feels about certain things" as most important in deciding whether a person belongs to their class. Differences among the other three criteria were not nearly as great: education was mentioned by 29 percent of the respondents, family background by 20 percent, and money by 17 percent.

In the present study, separate data were gathered on the rated importance of each of six possible criteria for membership in one's own social class, including occupation. To avoid introducing a bias in favor of naming occupation, these questions were asked before the occupation-class sort board was administered.

> In deciding whether someone belongs to the [class with which R has identified], how important is each of these things to you?
> The person's occupation? . . .
> What sort of education the person has? . . .
> How much money the person has? . . .
> How the person believes and feels about things? . . .
> The person's style of life? . . .
> The kind of family the person comes from? . . .

For each criterion, the respondent was asked, "Is this very important, somewhat important, or not important to you in deciding whether someone belongs to the [class with which R has identified]?"[7]

---

[7] Only 19 percent of the sample responded affirmatively to a follow-up question, "Is there anything else that you think is important . . . ?" and these respondents provided a total of more than 20 alternative additional criteria.

Table 3. Correlations Among the Six Criteria for Membership in One's Own Subjective Social Class[a]

	Occupation[b]	*Education*	*Money*	*Beliefs*	*Style*	*Family*
Occupation	—					
Education	.424	—				
Money	.298	.251	—			
Beliefs	.147	.286	−.019	—		
Lifestyle	.206	.278	.240	.354	—	
Family	.218	.321	.158	.287	.327	—

[a] Each correlation excludes the missing data from that pair of variables only. *N*'s range from 1,839 (*r* between Family and Beliefs) to 1,857 (*r* between Education and Occupation).

[b] All criteria are scored so that "Don't Know" is given the same score as "Not Important."

In drafting these questions, it was intended that the first three criteria (Occupation, Education, Money) reflect more objective characteristics, and that the next criteria (Beliefs, Style) reflect more expressive or cultural characteristics. The last criterion (Family) deals with inheritance and socialization, and it is more ambiguous whether this might be interpreted as an objective and/or a cultural factor.

Before examining the rated importance of these six possible criteria for class membership, we can check their validity by investigating the degree to which respondents differentiated among them.[8] The correlations among the criteria (in Table 3) provide data on their empirical grouping and aid in interpreting their meaning to respondents. The highest correlation is between Occupation and Education (.424), followed by that between Beliefs and Lifestyle (.354). Occupation and Money both correlate more highly with each other and with Education than they do with the other three criteria. Education, however, has its highest correlation with Occupation but its lowest correlation with Money. These results suggest that, of the first three criteria, Occupation and Money may be interpreted as objective status criteria, while Education is primarily an objective criterion that has a significant cultural/expressive component as well. This interpretation

---

[8] A count of responses over the six criteria suggests that the overwhelming majority of respondents found the criteria meaningful and differentiated among them. Only about 7 percent of the respondents said "don't know" to any of the six items; 4 percent said "don't know" to only one criterion, and one-half of the remainder said "don't know" to two criteria. Fewer than 4 percent of the respondents said that all 6 criteria were "very important," while only another 6 percent rated five of the criteria as very important, and 9 percent gave this response for four criteria. Less than one-sixth thought three criteria were very important, while approximately one-fifth each rated two criteria or only one criterion as very important. Another fifth rated none of the criteria as very important. A count of the responses "somewhat important" and "not important" over the six criteria yielded parallel figures.

Table 4. Rated Importance of Six Criteria for Membership in One's Own Subjective Social Class: Percentage Distributions for All Respondents

	Rated Importance				
Criteria	*Very Important*	*Somewhat Important*	*Not Important*	*Don't Know*	*Base N*
Occupation	37.0	30.8	29.8	2.4	1,864
Education	33.2	35.6	29.7	1.6	1,859
Money	28.9	30.9	38.1	2.0	1,856
Beliefs and feelings	40.0	28.5	27.9	3.6	1,852
Style of life	38.6	34.0	24.1	3.3	1,855
Kind of family	21.4	27.6	49.2	1.8	1,849

is supported by the fact that the last three criteria (Beliefs, Lifestyle, Family) all correlate more highly with Education than with the other two objective criteria. Of the last three criteria, Beliefs has its highest correlation with Lifestyle, and its next highest with Family and with Education; Lifestyle has its highest correlations with Beliefs and Family, and Family has its highest correlations with Lifestyle and Education. Thus, Beliefs and Lifestyle group together, while Family may be interpreted as predominantly an expressive/cultural criterion but with a small objective status component. In short, the six criteria do form two broadly interpretable groups. At the same time, of course, the correlations between the objective and cultural criteria suggest that they are not mutually exclusive.

I turn now to the importance of these six possible criteria in Americans' definitions of their social class. Table 4 presents the percentages of respondents rating each criterion as "very important," "somewhat important," and "not important" (as well as those saying "don't know"). The three factors that are most likely to be considered very important are "how the person believes and feels about things," "style of life," and "occupation": each is rated "very important" by approximately two-fifths of the respondents. Education is only slightly behind in rated importance, and it is as likely to be considered at least "somewhat important" as the three criteria above. Money and family background are the least likely to be considered important, with almost 4 out of 10 and 5 out of 10, respectively, saying these two factors are "not important" in the way they define their social class.[9]

These data indicate that cultural/expressive factors weigh at least as heavily as objective status characteristics in Americans' conceptions of their social class. These results are fairly consistent with those obtained by Centers 30 years earlier, although the emphasis on

---

[9] Note that Americans' conceptions of class pay little attention to a person's family background. Social mobility appears to be both expected and accepted. This is consistent with Centers' results, although the rated importance of family background seems to have fallen more sharply behind other factors in the present study.

Table 5. Mean Rated Importance of Six Criteria[a] for Membership in One's Own Subjective Social Class, by Subjective Class and Race

	Occupation	*Education*	*Income*	*Beliefs*	*Style*	*Family*
Whites[b]						
Poor	2.17	2.23	2.34	1.96	2.09	1.82
Working	2.12	1.95	1.76	2.06	1.98	1.66
Middle	1.93	1.96	1.94	2.07	2.19	1.69
Upper middle	1.97	2.03	1.94	2.13	2.14	1.57
Upper	2.00	2.44	1.69	2.25	2.56	2.06
Blacks[c]						
Poor	2.28	2.42	2.13	2.37	2.21	1.94
Working	2.20	2.26	1.77	2.36	2.33	2.05
Middle	2.28	2.14	1.86	2.30	2.16	1.84

[a] Criteria scored as follows: "Not Important" and "Don't Know" = 1, "Somewhat Important" = 2, "Very Important" = 3.

[b] Base *N*'s for each of the classes among whites range as follows: Poor (76–78), Working (580–588), Middle (758–761), Upper middle (147–149), Upper (16). Note the Upper Class *N* is too small to be reliable.

[c] Base *N*'s for each of the classes among blacks range as follows: Poor (52–53), Working (80–81), Middle (43). Since only 3 blacks identified with the Upper middle and 3 with the Upper Class, means for these groups are not presented.

cultural/expressive factors is less exclusive in the present data.[10] Recall that the correlations among the six criteria indicate that few people mentioned exclusively cultural or objective factors:[11] this implies that class is indeed popularly interpreted as a social, as well as an economic, phenomenon in the American consciousness. The criteria people use to define membership in their social class exceeds the narrow Weberian definition of class and is more consistent with the Marxist and interest-group interpretations.

Examination of the criteria for class membership in each of the subjective classes indicates only a slight variant on this general theme. Table 5 presents the mean rated importance of each of the six criteria by subjective class and race (the control for race is necessary since blacks are more likely to rate all the criteria except Money as "very important" and the proportion black increases with descending social class). Weber argued that people in higher status groups would be more inclined to define group membership in terms of cultural characteristics, as a way of keeping their membership more exclusive (Weber, 1946:192–93). Consistent with this argument, there is a slight tendency among whites for the relative mean importance assigned to expressive, rather than objective, criteria to increase with ascending subjective class (this pattern is not, however, found among blacks). Reading across the rows, the two criteria that receive the highest mean ratings among whites identifying with the poor are two objective criteria, Income and Education. For working class identifiers, the two criteria with the highest mean ratings are Occupation and Beliefs—one objective and one expressive criterion. Among those identifying with either the middle or the upper middle class, the two criteria with the highest mean ratings are both expressive, Lifestyle and Beliefs. These class differences should not, however, be overstated. There is only slight variation by class around the persistent prominence of both objective and expressive criteria in the definition of class membership.

---

[10] The results in the present study for white males only are essentially the same as those for the full sample.

[11] Indeed, a separate analysis indicates that only about 8 percent of the sample (excluding missing data) limited their choices to occupation, education, or income, and only about 10 percent limited their choices to beliefs, lifestyle, or family: as many as 80 percent chose at least one criterion from the first group *plus* at least one from the second group.

Summary and Conclusions

This paper has explored the meaning that Americans assign to five common social class terms: poor, working class, middle class, upper middle class, and upper class. Although these terms are frequently used, there has been no thorough analysis of their meaning to Americans since Centers' classic study published 30 years ago. Such an analysis is especially germane since some have argued that social class has become meaningless or irrelevant to most Americans.

Direct comparison with Centers' study is complicated by differing samples and items, but the general pattern of my results suggests that social class is no less significant to Americans in the 1970s than it was in the 1940s. About 8 out of 10 Americans feel at least somewhat strongly about their identification with a social class, and as many as 5 out of 10 feel very strongly about it. More important, the critical exercise of associating occupations with classes elicits little or no confusion from most respondents, who also demonstrate considerable agreement about how occupations are affiliated with classes.

The way Americans associate occupations with classes suggests that they are more sensitive to socioeconomic hierarchies based on occupational prestige, education, skill, income, job authority, and task discretion than they are to the blue-collar/white-collar dichotomy. However, the only occupations that elicit sharp disagreement about their class location are the skilled blue-collar occupations. Thus, while nonmanual status is most commonly considered insufficient for middle-class membership if the work is routine, it is also the case that many respondents cannot think of manual work as middle class, even if it is skilled.

Beyond the basic issue of the perceived affiliation of occupations with classes, Americans' broader definitions of criteria for membership in their own social class indicate clearly that class is experienced as a social or cultural affinity as much as an objective, economic affinity. Such cultural/expressive criteria as "how the person believes and feels about things" and "the person's style of life" are as likely to be considered important in defining one's subjective social class as "the person's occupation." While the relative importance assigned to cultural/expressive factors increases somewhat with ascending social class, the emphasis on cultural or objective criteria is far from mutually exclusive in any class.

In short, the analyses in this paper suggest that there is reasonable agreement about the basic issue of the association between occupations and classes, and that popular notions of this association are guided by standard socioeconomic criteria. They also suggest, however, a widespread tendency to define class membership more broadly than by objective status characteristics alone. These patterns are at variance with the idea that there is considerable confusion about class, and they offer little support for the more general argument that social class is of dwindling significance in the United States.

References

Bell, Daniel
1973 The Coming of Post-Industrial Society. New York: Basic Books.
Case, Herman M.
1955 "Marxian implications of Centers' interest-group theory: a critical appraisal." Social Forces 33:254–58.
Centers, Richard
1949 The Psychology of Social Classes. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
1956 "The intensity dimension of class consciousness and some social and psychological correlates." Journal of Social Psychology 44:101–14.
Dahrendorf, Ralf
1959 Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Dalia, Joan T., and Avery M. Guest
1975 "Embourgeoisement among blue-collar workers?" Sociological Quarterly 16:291–304.
Duncan, Otis Dudley
1961 "A socioeconomic index for all occupations" and "Properties and characteristics of the socioeconomic index." Pp. 109–161 in Albert J. Reiss, et al., Occupations and Social Status. New York: Free Press.
Haer, John L.
1957 "An empirical study of social class awareness." Social Forces 36:117–21.

Hodge, Robert W., and Donald J. Treiman
1968 "Class identification in the United States." American Journal of Sociology 73:535–47.
Jackman, Mary R., and Robert W. Jackman
1973 "An interpretation of the relation between objective and subjective social status." American Sociological Review 38:569–82.
Laumann, Edward O.
1966 Prestige and Association in an Urban Community. New York: Bobbs-Merrill.
Marx, Karl
1964 "Social classes and class conflict." Pp. 178–202 in T. B. Bottomore and Maximilien Rubel (eds.), Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy. New York: McGraw-Hill.
Mills, C. Wright
1956 White Collar: The American Middle Classes. New York: Oxford University Press.
Nisbet, Robert A.
1970 "The decline and fall of social class." Pp. 570–74 in Edward O. Laumann, Paul M. Siegel, and Robert W. Hodge (eds.), The Logic of Social Hierarchies. Chicago: Markham.
Portes, Alejandro
1971 "Political primitivism, differential socialization and lower class leftist radicalism." American Sociological Review 36:820–35.
Robinson, Robert V., and Jonathan Kelley
1979 "Class as conceived by Marx and Dahrendorf: effects on income inequality, class consciousness, and class conflict in the United States and Great Britain." American Sociological Review 44:38–58.
Rosenberg, Morris
1953 "Perceptual obstacles to class consciousness." Social Forces 32:22–27.
Schuman, Howard
1966 "The random probe: a technique for evaluating the validity of closed questions." American Sociological Review 31:218–22.
Siegel, Paul M.
1971 "Prestige in the American occupational structure." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago.
Vanneman, Reeve, and Fred C. Pampel
1977 "The American perception of class and status." American Sociological Review 42:422–37.
Weber, Max
1946 "Class, status, party." Pp. 180–195 in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. New York: Oxford University Press.
Wilensky, Harold L.
1966 "Class, class consciousness, and American workers." Pp. 12–28 in William Haber (ed.), Labor in a Changing America. New York: Basic Books.
Wright, Erik Olin, and Luca Perrone
1977 "Marxist class categories and income inequality." American Sociological Review 42:32–55.

Changes in White Attitudes Toward Blacks: 1963–1977

JOHN G. CONDRAN

SOCIAL SCIENTISTS have devoted serious attention to the attitudes of the American population toward black people since the early 1940s. The results of these studies are well known: white Americans have become far more accepting of virtually every aspect of racial integration (see Schwartz, 1967, for studies before the mid-sixties, and Taylor et al., 1978, for a summary of the more recent work). Consistent relationships between racial attitudes and important social structural characteristics have also been repeatedly noted. Racial "liberals" are typically young, well educated, and nonsouthern (Hyman and Sheatsley, 1956 and 1964; Sheatsley, 1965; Schwartz, 1967; Greeley and Sheatsley, 1971; Campbell, 1971; Taylor et al., 1978). The young show greater liberality of attitude toward racial matters presumably because the most recent cohorts have experienced a more "liberal" socialization and because they are more susceptible to the influence of period events (Ryder, 1965). The better educated are more "liberal" for a variety of reasons including intellectual enlightenment

---

Abstract This paper investigates white attitudes toward blacks from national survey data collected in 1963, 1972, and 1977. Five attitude items are examined with respect to a full multivariate framework including age, educational attainment, region of residence, and time as independent variables. The results generally show large effects for each independent variable on each attitude item, net of the others. Variations from this pattern are also explored. There is evidence that racial liberalism among whites is slowing its growth in the 1970s and even reversing in some cases. The results are discussed and tentative conclusions suggested.

John G. Condran is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana. The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the members of his department, especially Whitney Gordon, for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper, and to thank Ann Siverly for her assistance in typing this version.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1979 by The Trustees of Columbia University
Published by Elsevier North-Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/79/0043-463/$1.75

(Campbell, 1971:61–9), enhanced psychological ego strength (Schwartz, 1967:119), the close association of ecucation with general socioeconomic status (Noel, 1971:67), and issue life history effects (Schreiber, 1978). Nonsoutherners are typically more "liberal" because of differential racial socialization and the pressures of social control on racial attitudes (Noel, 1971; Reed, 1972; Middleton, 1976).

Further, some of these studies have demonstrated that age and education similarly affect racial attitudes in the South and the non-South and that education maintains its effect while controlling for age (but see Campbell, 1971, for a dissenting view). However, what none of these studies has done is to simultaneously examine the effects of age, education, region of residence, and the passage of time in a fully multivariate framework. That is the purpose of this paper.

Procedures

Subsequent to the 1963 benchmark study of racial attitudes conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, most attitude surveys have used some or all of eight items contained in it. Five of these items are also available from the General Social Survey (Davis, 1978) for 1972 and 1977. The items are as follows:

SCHOOLS— Do you think white students and Negro students should go to the same schools or to separate schools? (same, separate)
DINNER— How strongly would you object if a member of your family wanted to bring a Negro friend home to dinner? (not object, object)
MARRIAGE— Do you think there should be laws against marriages between Negroes and whites? (no, yes)
HOUSING— White people have a right to keep Negroes out of their neighborhoods if they want to, and Negroes should respect that right. (disagree, agree)
INTRUSION— Negroes shouldn't push themselves where they're not wanted. (disagree, agree)

The possible responses in parentheses are, respectively, the "liberal" and the "nonliberal" alternatives.

Instead of aggregating responses to these five items to form a unidimensional scale, it seems preferable to examine the impact of the independent variables on each item separately. That way different relationships between the racial attitude items and the explanatory factors can be discerned. The manner of coding of the independent variables is as follows:

COHORT: Age is aggregated into birth cohorts for comparability across the three survey dates. Five cohort bands are identified for all three dates and more recent cohort bands for two dates or one date.

EDUCATION: Respondents are categorized into three educational attainment classes: some college or more, high school graduates, and less than a high school degree.

REGION: Respondents are classified into southern and nonsouthern region of residence based on the U.S. Census classification.

TIME: Respondents are classified by the survey date in which they appeared, the 1963 NORC survey, the 1972 GSS, or the 1977 GSS.

Since the dependent variables are categorical in nature, traditional regression procedures are less than fully appropriate, especially with regard to homoscedasticity. Accordingly, Goodman's log-linear techniques will be used for this analysis (Goodman, 1972). This modified multiple regression procedure allows for the specification of additive effects on the log-odds of responding in a "liberal" manner for each dependent variable.

The other feature of the log-linear approach that is attractive in this context is the ability to unambiguously set various interaction effects to zero and test that model against the observed data. If the model fits, the interaction effect is unnecessary to represent the data; if the model does not fit, the interaction term is necessary (Goodman, 1971; Davis, 1975c). It is important to actively search for significant interaction terms in this topic area (and perhaps many others) since it is quite possible that the effect of one independent variable on a racial attitude may vary with the level of another independent variable. Identification of these interactions should assist us in understanding the determinants of racial attitudes and the dynamics that underlie their change. Conversely, the lack of a significant interaction term may also be of theoretical interest.

In the remainder of this paper, zero-order relationships between the independent variables will be shown; various models for the observed data will be specified and tested and final models determined; modified multiple regression equations for each dependent variable will be presented; selected odds ratios in each equation will be shown; and finally, the results will be discussed and tentative conclusions drawn.

Results

The marginal distribution (percent "liberal") and the zero-order relationships between the dependent variables and the independent variables are shown in Table 1. With the exception of INTRUSION, white attitudes have become substantially more "liberal" from 1963 to 1972. From 1972 to 1977, however, with the exception of MARRIAGE, the changes are much smaller and, in the case of HOUSING, has reversed.

The relationships between cohort membership, educational attain-

Table 1. Percent Liberal for Five Racial Attitudes by Birth Cohort, Education, and Region, U.S. Whites, 1963, 1972, and 1977

		Birth Cohort								Education			Region	
	All	*1956–1959*	*1951–1955*	*1946–1950*	*1936–1945*	*1926–1935*	*1916–1925*	*1906–1915*	*before 1906*	*Col.*	*HS*	*<HS*	*Non-South*	*South*
Schools														
1963	62.9				68.0	70.2	65.9	61.5	50.7	74.9	72.3	52.3	75.7	29.7
1972	86.2		96.1	96.1	86.9	89.7	84.2	83.7	72.7	96.1	91.1	73.6	92.1	68.4
1977	86.0	91.4	94.1	88.2	89.7	88.1	86.0	74.5	71.4	95.3	90.0	74.2	91.6	72.9
Dinner														
1963	49.6				56.4	50.5	48.0	54.1	42.8	62.5	54.4	41.3	58.3	27.2
1972	69.7		82.1	74.5	71.2	70.8	64.4	72.2	60.3	78.9	69.5	62.1	75.5	52.4
1977	71.1	82.9	80.9	78.0	75.4	70.9	70.3	50.0	62.4	83.8	72.8	58.0	75.7	60.3
Marriage														
1963	36.4				45.3	45.8	39.2	32.0	22.1	59.6	42.8	22.6	43.1	19.1
1972	60.7		84.2	77.7	66.9	65.0	57.7	52.9	32.1	77.7	66.4	41.4	66.6	43.2
1977	71.7	84.1	88.4	89.9	80.6	75.2	61.6	46.1	45.2	89.7	78.9	48.7	79.9	52.5
Housing														
1963	39.3				46.3	46.8	43.0	36.1	26.4	53.6	44.5	29.9	46.7	20.1
1972	59.9		80.0	75.2	65.8	63.5	55.1	46.6	42.3	74.7	60.3	46.8	64.3	46.9
1977	57.6	69.5	71.5	62.0	63.8	60.5	50.0	41.2	41.2	71.1	61.1	42.2	62.6	45.7
Intrusion														
1963	21.8				29.5	27.8	17.1	21.0	15.4	35.2	21.5	15.8	25.7	11.8
1972	24.2		51.4	40.1	29.5	26.2	14.2	11.5	14.5	37.5	23.4	14.2	27.9	13.7
1977	27.1	40.2	38.9	35.5	37.5	22.5	19.7	13.0	10.4	43.8	24.4	15.1	31.8	15.8

NOTE: See text for definitions of variables.

ment, and region of residence and each of the dependent variables show similar patterns. Cohorts, educational strata and regions are all quite differentiated with respect to their liberalism on all items. Younger, better-educated, nonsoutherners are more "liberal" than their counterparts at all dates. Also, the pattern of attitude change seems not inconsistent with a model asserting a constant rate of change for each category of each independent variable. Thus, it is not only the youngest cohorts who are becoming more "liberal" over time, but also members of older cohorts. Essentially the same statement applies to members of the educational and regional categories.

The careful reader of Table 1 will note that there appears to be some evidence of a "closing of the gap" between the South and the non-South for at least SCHOOLS, DINNER, and HOUSING over time. Whether this is true or merely attributable to the random fluctuation of sampling error is the type of question that has plagued survey analysts for decades. The resolution of this seeming dilemma requires the formal invocation of probability theory. It is precisely this which the log-linear system offers (Duncan, 1975).

Table 2 contains the results of the search for adequate models of effects that well represent the data without extraneous terms. Panel A shows the independence model for each dependent variable. This model asserts that there is no association between the dependent variable and any of the independent variables. It is not expected to fit. The utility of this model is that it shows the total amount of association in the dependent variable that may be assigned to the independent variables for explanation. Thus, its chi-square value is somewhat analogous to the total sum of squares in the analysis of variance. The remaining panels involve the partitioning of this total association value.

Panel B shows the chi-square value for the main effect mode. This model asserts that each independent variable is associated with the dependent variable and that there are no interactions between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The figure to the right of the chi-square value indicates the amount of the total association not explained by this model. Thus, it is somewhat analogous to $1-R^2$ from the more familiar metric linear model. Each main effects model accounts for at least three-fourths of the total association and some, notably SCHOOLS and MARRIAGE, account for substantially more.

Panel C shows the net direct effects of each of the main effects from panel B for each dependent variable. The chi-square value is indicated along with the amount of the total association in the dependent variable associated with that main effect. The righthand figure in each vertical block then shows the percent of the total association attribut-

Table 2. Log-Linear Models of Selected Determinants of Racial Liberalism, for U.S. Whites 1963, 1972, and 1977

Model	*df*	*Schools*		*Dinner*		*Marriage*		*Housing*		*Intrusion*	
		χ^2_{LR}	χ^2_H/χ^2_T	χ^2_{LR}	χ^2_H/χ^2_T	χ^2_{LR}	χ^2_H/χ^2_T	χ^2_{LR}	χ^2_T/χ^2_H	χ^2_{LR}	χ^2_H/χ^2_T
A. Baseline model (A)(CERT)	89	852.97	100.00	488.51	100.00	887.00	100.00	464.17	100.00	342.96	100.00
B. Main effects model (AC)(AE)(AR)(AT)(CERT)	80	106.10	12.44	100.57	20.59	86.78	9.78	93.53	20.15	79.41	23.15
C. Net direct effects of main effects model											
1. (AC)	4	25.72	3.02	7.10	1.45	83.15	9.37	49.69	10.70	58.79	17.14
2. (AE)	2	127.36	14.93	76.16	15.59	240.99	27.17	97.39	20.98	91.13	26.57
3. (AR)	1	336.58	39.46	163.60	33.49	163.32	18.41	89.57	19.30	66.52	19.40
4. (AT)	2	168.66	19.77	87.18	17.85	161.46	18.20	50.49	10.88	6.57	1.92
D. Net effects of 3-way parameters											
1. (AET)	4	14.47	1.70								
2. (ART)	2			10.15	2.08			10.32	2.22		
3. (ACT)	8			27.05	5.53						
E. Full model		91.63	10.74	62.73	12.84	86.78	9.78	83.20	17.92	79.41	23.15

NOTE: Variables are: A—the specific attitude item; C—birth cohort; E—educational attainment; R—region of residence; T—time of survey. *df* = degrees of freedom associated with the model. χ^2_{LR} = the likelihood-ratio chi-square value. χ^2_H/χ^2_T = the percent of the baseline chi-square value accounted for by the chi-square value of the model. The values in panels A, B, and E indicate the amount of association unexplained by the model. The values in panels C and D indicate the amount of association explained by the model.

able to each independent variable. This percent can thus be interpreted in a manner somewhat analogous to a partial R^2 measure from the metric linear model. The effects of birth cohort are generally modest, except for INTRUSION, indicating that cohort differentiation does not account for a large share of the variation in racial attitudes. Education accounts for substantial amounts of the total association in the dependent variables, especially for MARRIAGE and INTRUSION. This indicates that educational differentiation has been and continues to be a powerful explanatory factor in understanding racial attitudes. Region of residence also accounts for large amounts of variation in the dependent variables. The minimum amount of association attributable to region of residence is about 20 percent and, in the case of SCHOOLS, it is about 40 percent. One must conclude that region of residence continues to have a pervasive effect on the racial attitudes of white Americans that is independent of the effects of age, education, and time. The last main effect, time of survey, shows that for all the dependent variables except INTRUSION, attitude changes have occurred that are independent of the other variables. This is attitude change in its "pure" form, not associated with changes in the composition of the population. The percents associated with time are substantial for SCHOOLS, DINNER, and MARRIAGE, and intermediate for HOUSING and small for INTRUSION.

Panel D shows the net effects of interaction terms that were significant ($p < .01$) beyond the main effects model. SCHOOLS shows interaction terms between education and time, DINNER shows interaction terms between region and time and between cohort and time, and HOUSING shows an interaction term between region and time. The chi-square values and the percent of the total association attributable to these three-way effects are also presented.

Finally, panel E shows the chi-square value for the full models and the amount of the total association not explained by that model. These full models account for about 80 percent of the association for HOUSING and INTRUSION and for about 90 percent of the association for SCHOOLS, DINNER, and MARRIAGE. For MARRIAGE and INTRUSION the figures are the same as in panel B because there are no interaction terms involved for those variables.

The foregoing analysis has shown the magnitude of the effects in the final models for each dependent variable. It is also necessary to examine the nature of these effects. As in traditional multiple regression analysis, knowledge of correlation coefficients does not generally imply the regression coefficients. Table 3 shows modified multiple regression coefficients (betas) for each dependent variable. They can be interpreted in a manner analogous to regression coefficients from a

Table 3. Modified Multiple Regression Coefficients (Betas) for the Full Models for Racial Liberalism

Variables	*Schools*	*Dinner*	*Marriage*	*Housing*	*Intrusion*
(Intercept)	1.316	.358	−.038	−.164	−1.590
Birth cohort					
1936–1945	.154	.188	.432	.334	.564
1926–1935	.254	.036	.370	.276	.234
1916–1925	.102	−.046	.032	.020	−.234
1906–1915	−.084	−.030	−.206	−.222	−.240
before 1906	−.426	−.150	−.630	−.408	−.324
Education					
College	.746	.444	.762	.508	.590
High school	.052	−.028	.010	−.074	−.160
<High school	.798	−.416	−.772	−.434	−.430
Region					
Non-South	.874	.526	.572	.404	.456
South	−.874	−.526	−.572	−.404	−456
Time					
1977	.508	.290	.564	.180	.028
1972	.448	.238	.098	.290	−.154
1963	−.956	−.528	−.662	−.470	.126

dummy variable analysis. Specifically, the equations refer to the log-odds of responding in a "liberal" manner on an item when categorized in a particular manner on the independent variables. These beta coefficients or "slopes" thus indicate the nature of the relationship between a given independent and dependent variable.

The first row of Table 3 shows an intercept value. This indicates the overall response tendency of the pooled samples. For SCHOOLS, most respondents take a "liberal" position (large positive value), whereas for INTRUSION, most respondents take the nonliberal stance (large negative value). Throughout the table, a positive value indicates an association of that category of that variable with the "liberal" response *as compared to the average response*, given by the intercept value. Conversely, a negative value indicates a dissociation of that category of that variable with the "liberal" response *as compared to the average response*, given by the intercept value.

The intercept values show that SCHOOLS receives the most liberal support followed, in order, by DINNER, MARRIAGE, and HOUSING, and finally INTRUSION, which receives the least liberal support. At the risk of repetitition, it should be borne in mind that as the beta coefficients for the independent variables are presented, they must be seen as deviations from the central value of the intercept. Thus, when we see a large, positive beta coefficient for a category of an independent variable, this does not necessarily mean individuals so classified are extremely "liberal"; it may mean they are "illiberal" but far less so than the average.

The effect coefficients for birth cohort show generally predictable relationships with the dependent variables. For MARRIAGE, HOUSING, and INTRUSION the betas decline monotonically with increasing age, suggesting the persistent effects of early socialization on racial attitudes. For SCHOOLS there is a reversal between the youngest and next youngest cohorts. Whether this indicates a turn away from the high levels of liberalism on this item for the youngest cohort is not clear. However, it is instructive to note that this did not occur for any of the other four dependent variables. For DINNER the coefficients are quite small relative to the other items but, with one exception, in the expected direction. SCHOOLS, HOUSING and INTRUSION show substantial cohort differentiation, DINNER relatively little, and MARRIAGE the greatest amount.

The population is differentiated with regard to educational attainment on all five racial attitude items in the expected direction. SCHOOLS and MARRIAGE show the greatest amount of differentiation while the others show moderate amounts.

With regard to region of residence, in all cases the South is decidedly less liberal than the non-South, net of all other independent variables. The contrast is sharpest for the SCHOOLS item and smaller but substantial for the other four.

The last variable shows the effect of the passage of time, net of the other independent variables. For SCHOOLS, DINNER, and HOUSING the respondents in the 1963 survey were decidedly less "liberal" than the respondents in the other two surveys and the difference between two surveys in the 1970s is much smaller than the difference between 1963 and 1972. The change in attitudes that has occurred across the board for everyone occurred mainly in the 1960s and very early 1970s. However, the other two dependent variables are not so arranged. For MARRIAGE about as much change in attitudes has occurred between 1972 and 1977 as occurred between 1963 and 1972. And for INTRUSION, although there has not been substantial change over time, what change that has occurred indicates a retrenchment in "liberal" attitudes, especially from 1963 to 1972. This is perhaps interpretable as one recalls the timing of the major thrusts of the civil right movement during the 1960s, if we assume the INTRUSION item is a measure of generalized negative feelings toward blacks prescinding from any norms of social justice. This point will be developed in the next section.

As indicated above, there are interaction terms pertaining to three of the five racial items under consideration. In Table 4 the beta coefficients for these interaction terms are displayed.

DINNER is involved with two interactions between independent variables, birth cohort with time, and region of residence with time.

Table 4. Three-way Parameter Effect Coefficients (Betas) for the Full Models

Dinner	*Cohort by time*				
	1936–45	*1926–35*	*1916–25*	*1906–15*	*before 1906*
1977	.118	.140	.246	−.536	.030
1972	−.192	.082	−.150	.272	−.012
1963	.072	−.222	−.096	.264	−.018
	Region by time				
	Non-South	*South*			
1977	−.194	.194			
1972	.058	−.058			
1963	.136	−.136			
Schools	*Education by time*				
	College	*High School*	*<High School*		
1977	.118	.038	−.154		
1972	.242	−.098	−.144		
1963	−.360	.060	.300		
Housing	*Region by time*				
	Non-South	*South*			
1977	−.094	.094			
1972	−.104	.104			
1963	.198	−.198			

The betas form no discernible pattern in the cohort with time interaction and are apparently due in large part to the anomalous drop in percent "liberal" among persons in the 1906–1915 cohort for 1977 (see Table 1). Even though the interaction is statistically significant, there appears to be no compelling substantive significance involved. The other interaction pertaining to DINNER is with region and time. The betas indicate there is a statistically significant "closing of the gap" between the South and the non-South over time. In the non-South, respondents are less "liberal" in 1977 than the coefficient for time would lead us to believe, and in the South the respondents are more "liberal" in 1977, again compared to the unadjusted time coefficient.

For SCHOOLS, the interaction involves education and time. The beta coefficients show the opposite of the above interaction, namely, a "widening of the gap" between educational strata. The college-educated are more "liberal" in the 1970s than expected on the basis of the time coefficients, and those with less than a high school diploma are less "liberal" in the 1970s than expected on the same grounds.

The last interaction affects HOUSING, involving again region and

Table 5. Selected Odds Ratios Between Birth Cohort, Education, Region of Residence, and Time and Five Racial Attitudes from the Full Models

	Schools	*Dinner*	*Marriage*	*Housing*	*Intrusion*
Main effects					
Birth cohort					
1936–1945/ before 1906	1.786	1.402	2.892	2.100	2.430
Education					
College/ <High school	4.683	2.363	4.637	2.565	2.773
Region					
Non-South/ South	5.743	2.863	3.139	2.243	2.489
Time					
1977/1963	4.323	2.266	3.408	1.916	0.907
Interactions					
Region					
1977		1.942		1.859	
1972		3.216		1.822	
1966		3.758		3.333	
Education					
1977	7.553				
1972	4.581				
1963	2.974				

time. The pattern is the same as for DINNER; in the non-South, respondents are not as "liberal" as the time coefficient would indicate, and in the South they are more "liberal" than the time figure suggests.

Finally, selected odds ratios between the independent variables and each dependent variable are presented in Table 5. Since these ratios are scalar quantities, they are easily interpretable, indicating how many times more likely members of one category of a variable are to be "liberal" than are members of another category. Thus, the upper lefthand entry of Table 5 shows that members of the youngest cohort are 1.786 times more likely to respond in a "liberal" manner on the SCHOOLS item than are members of the oldest cohort. The odds ratios for the interaction terms discussed above are also shown in Table 5, except for the anomalous cohort by time interaction for DINNER.

Discussion

In this section the similarities and differences in the determinants of response patterns and changes in these patterns will be emphasized by discussing the findings, racial item by racial item.

For SCHOOLS we see a strong pattern of differentiation with regard to all the independent variables in predictable directions. The interaction between education and time shows that the odds of responding in a "liberal" manner have increased over time for the better educated as compared to the less well educated. This is because the better educated have become virtually unanimous in their approval of integrated schools whereas the less well educated have changed at a slower rate. The downward shift in approval for the youngest cohorts, not included in the multivariate analysis (Table 1), adds a cautionary note to this extremely "liberal" picture.

For DINNER the odds shown in Table 5 are generally small. This means there is little differentiation among categories of the independent variables. The interaction between region and time shows that the South has become more "liberal" on this issue over both time periods, but the non-South has "stalled" at 1972.

For MARRIAGE we see the greatest cohort differentiation. Since intermarriage has traditionally been the least acceptable form of racial integration, this comes as no surprise. The other odds ratios are also quite large, indicating continuing differentiation among members of the population on this issue.

For HOUSING we note the interaction between region and time. The odds show that the gap between the South and the non-South closed somewhat between 1963 and 1972 but not thereafter. Also, there is some evidence, as with SCHOOLS, of declining liberalism. From Table 1 we see the youngest cohorts moving away from the "liberal" position rather sharply. It may well be the case that attempts to integrate housing in our society, or at least the *perception* that such efforts have been made, are causing some modification of attitudes among white Americans.

The last item, INTRUSION, shows the least amount of overall liberalism and the least amount of change over time. There is substantial differentiation among members of the population, especially among cohorts. If there is some sense in interpreting responses to this item as an index of "free-floating" hostility toward blacks, unencumbered by norms of social justice that have penetrated the other items, the low liberalism and relative lack of change become understandable. White Americans may have simply improved their conformity to the increasingly institutionalized normative standards of an officially "liberal" society.

Conclusions

From 1963 to 1972 there is unambiguous evidence of generally liberalizing racial attitudes in our society. This is consistent with the analysis of Taylor et al. (1978) and other analyses of similar (Davis, 1975a) and dissimilar (Davis, 1975b; Duncan, 1973) attitudes studies. The period between 1972 and 1977, however, is less clear. For some of our attitude items, the liberalizing process continues unabated. For others, progress has essentially halted and in two cases (HOUSING and INTRUSION) reversed.

With the data at hand, it is clearly not possible to provide a final answer to the "why" of these progressions, halts, and reverses. This paper has been more an exercise in specifying the "where" of racial attitude change rather than the "why." One is tempted to indulge in speculation about the changes in the economy and other threat-producing aspects of the 1970s in search of an interpretation for these findings. But this would be *only* speculation. Social scientists need far more reliable information on both racial attitudes and macro-social characteristics before such speculation becomes informed. One message is clear, however: The "liberals" of 1977 have less reason to be sanguine concerning white American racial attitudes than their counterparts of 1972.

References

Campbell, Angus
1971 White Attitudes Toward Black People. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research.
Davis, James A.
1975a "Analysing contingency tables with linear flow graphs: d systems." Pp. 111–45 in David R. Heise (ed.), Sociological Methodology, 1976. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
1975b "Communism, conformity, cohorts, and categories: American tolerance in 1954 and 1972/73." American Journal of Sociology 81:491–513.
1975c "The log-linear analysis of survey replications." Pp. 75–104 in Kenneth C. Land and Seymour Spilerman (eds.), Social Indicator Models. New York: Russell Sage.
1978 General Social Surveys, 1972–1978: Cumulative Data. New Haven: Roper Public Opinion Research Center.
Duncan, Otis Dudley
1973 Social Change in a Metropolitan Community. New York: Russell Sage.
1975 "Measuring social change via replication of surveys" Pp. 105–27 in Kenneth C. Land and Seymour Spilerman (eds.), Social Indicator Models. New York: Russell Sage.
Goodman, Leo A.
1971 "The analysis of multidimensional contingency tables: stepwise procedures and direct estimation methods for building models for multiple classifications." Technometrics 13:36–61.
1972 "A modified multiple regression approach to the analysis of dichotomized variables." American Sociological Review 37:28–46.

Greeley, Andrew M., and Paul B. Sheatsley
1971 "Attitudes toward racial integration." Scientific American 225:13–9.
Hyman, Herbert H., and Paul B. Sheatsley
1956 "Attitudes toward desegration." Scientific American 195:35–39.
1964 "Attitudes toward desegregation." Scientific American 211:16–23.
Middleton, Russell
1976 "Regional differences in prejudice." American Sociological Review 41:94–117.
Noel, Joseph Renny
1971 "White anti-black prejudice in the United States." International Journal of Group Tension 1:59–76.
Reed, John Shelton
1972 The Enduring South. Lexington, Mass.: Heath.
Ryder, Norman B.
1965 "The cohort as a concept in the study of social change." American Sociological Review 30:843–61.
Schreiber, E. M.
1978 "Education and change in American opinions on a woman for president." Public Opinion Quarterly 42:171–82.
Schwartz, Mildred A.
1967 Trends in White Attitudes Toward Negroes. Chicago: National Opinion Research Center.
Sheatsley, Paul B.
1965 "White attitudes toward the Negro." Daedalus 95:217–38.
Taylor, D. Garth, Paul B. Sheatsley, and Andrew M. Greeley
1978 "Attitudes toward racial integration." Scientific American 238:42–9.

Different Settings, Different Results? A Comparison of School and Home Responses

ANNE ZANES AND EUTHEMIA MATSOUKAS

DIFFERENCES in the amount of reported drug use among adolescent respondents in studies conducted in school and at home by our research group at Columbia University raised the question of possible response bias because of the setting of the interview. In a 1971 study among students in 18 high schools, the average level of reported use of marijuana and other illicit drugs was greater in every school studied than the reported use in a small-scale national representative household sample survey of youngsters twelve to seventeen years old completed the same year. Among the 18 high schools, the proportion of students reporting any use of marijuana ranged from a low of 23 percent in one school to a high of 58 percent in another. But in the national sample survey, only 15 percent reported such use (Elinson et al. 1977: Sections 3 and 7).

Several possible explanations may account for the difference in results. One is that the 18 schools were not selected to represent all United States high schools. Indeed, some were purposely chosen because drug use was thought to be especially prevalent among their students. Another explanation involves age differences in the two samples. In the study of high schools, approximately 5 percent of the students were over the age of seventeen. Since older youth report using more drugs than those younger (Elinson et al.), this may account for some of the differences in results.

Anne Zanes is a Research Associate at the Columbia University School of Public Health and project director of the study reported here. Euthemia Matsoukas recently received her Master's Degree in Social Work from Columbia University and is now a social worker at Roosevelt Hospital, New York. Research for this study was supported by NIMH Grant MH-17589 and NIDA Grant DA-00043.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1979 by The Trustees of Columbia University
Published by Elsevier North-Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/79/0043-550/$1.75

Another possible explanation has to do with the setting of the two surveys. In the school survey, young administrators went to the classrooms and asked students to fill in anonymous questionnaires; in the national household sample survey, older interviewers asked young people to fill out a similar abbreviated questionnaire. Although the youths were not asked to identify themselves in any way, they could hardly believe that their identity was unknown to the interviewers who found them at home.

In a different study comparing reported drug use at home and at school among frequently absent students, Kandel (1975) found less reported use of all types of drugs in the home interviews than at school, concluding that "despite verbal assurances of anonymity, personal interviews undoubtedly led to an underreporting of drug use within this sample of absentees."

The methodological question raised by these studies and dealt with in this article is whether it makes any difference in the results if youngsters respond to questionnaires about drug use and less threatening issues at home or in the more anonymous school setting. Do young people feel less threatened within a group at school than individually at home?

Method

To answer this question, an experiment was designed in which two matched samples of young people attending a single school were given identical questionnaires, half in the classroom and the other half at home. By using self-administered questionnaires in both settings, and by limiting the experiment to students in one school from one community, it was felt that any differences which might occur in reported drug behavior would be largely a result of the setting in which the data were collected. The self-administered questionnaire was selected as the method of data collection, since this is the method used most frequently in school surveys. More honest reporting might be expected on a self-administered questionnaire if a topic is considered to be threatening.

The subject matter for the experiment ranged from issues thought to have relatively little saliency and little threat for the respondent, such as measurement of attitudes toward leaders of the country, to issues judged a priori to be both threatening and salient, such as questions about illegal drug behavior. The range of the subject matter is of interest in light of Sudman and Bradburn's findings (1974) which show "the higher the threat, the greater the response effect, but the higher the saliency, the lower the response effect."

Data Collection

The population for this experiment was the entire eleventh grade in a large public high school in a city of 200,000 on the East Coast. The school is located in a stable, mostly white, middle- and upper-middle-class neighborhood.

The sampling units for the survey were 20 homerooms, to which students were assigned without reference to their ability; half of the homerooms were randomly selected for administration of the questionnaire at home, and the other half for school administration of the questionnaire. A total of 283 students were registered in the 10 homerooms included in the school sample, and 86 percent (244) completed the questionnaire. (Fourteen percent were absent on the day of the survey.) The home sample included 284 designated respondents. Of these, 238 (84 percent) participated in the survey.

The home interviews were conducted beginning the day after the questionnaire was administered in school and continued over a 10-day period. Interviewers contacted students at home, assured them of the confidentiality of the survey, and asked them to fill in questionnaires identical to those administered in school. They tried to keep other family members out of the "interviewing room" and succeeded in most cases. Upon completing the questionnaire, the student was asked to place it in an envelope, seal it, and return it to the interviewer.

Findings

Questions in this study which were assumed to be least salient and least threatening to adolescents measured attitudes toward social issues. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with five statements such as, "There's something basically wrong with our society." No statistically significant differences were found in answers given at school or at home on these issues.[1]

In developing this study, it was hypothesized that students would express different attitudes toward school and their families in the face-to-face contact of the home setting and in the more impersonal school setting. It was believed that if the students had any doubts about the confidentiality of their answers, they might be reluctant to express negative answers toward school when contacted there, or toward their parents when contacted at home. No such reluctance was found (see Table 1).

On questions about grade average, number of days absent, and educational aspirations, there were no significant differences between

---

[1] The test of significance used was χ^2 with a minimum acceptable significance level of $< .05$.

Table 1. Selected Attitudes Reported in School and Home Settings, 1972

	School (*N*=244)	*Home* (*N*=238)	*Difference*
Attitudes toward school			
Believe that they cannot say what they think in most classes	42%	24%	18%*
Believe that they are wasting their time in school	47	34	13*
Moods			
Feel very happy	26	36	10*
Feel bored a lot of time	42	32	10*
Feel close to friends	85	91	6
Relations with parents			
Would turn to one or both parents if in serious trouble	47	53	6
Feel very close to their mothers	47	52	5
Feel very close to their fathers	37	40	3
Keep seeing their friends openly even if parents objected strongly	59	57	2
Attitudes toward deviant and illegal behavior			
Proportion answering that most of their friends wouldn't care if someone they knew . . .			
Cheated on a test	87	81	6
Got drunk	80	77	3
Took something expensive from a store	35	27	8
Tried marijuana	56	56	—
Made money from selling drugs	17	11	6
Took a drug with a needle	6	3	3
Proportion agreeing . . .			
"It's all right to smoke a little marijuana (grass) from time to time at parties"	58	54	4
"If you can't sleep, it's OK to take a sleeping pill without a doctor's prescription"	35	28	7

* $p < .01$.

NOTE: Percentages are based on the number responding to each question; this number varied by question.

answers given at school and at home. However, a significant difference does appear between answers given at home and school on two attitudinal questions about school. When answering at school, 42 percent of the students answered that they could not say what they think in most classes, whereas 24 percent expressed this opinion when interviewed at home. Similarly, 47 percent of those at school and 34 percent of those at home answered that they were wasting their time in school.

Answers to questions about mood appear related to the results of the attitudinal questions about school. Significant differences in answers given at school and at home are found in questions about feeling happy or bored. Fewer students at school than at home answered that at this time in their lives they were "very happy" (26 percent at school and 36 percent at home). Forty-two percent of those in school answered that they "feel bored a lot of time," and 32 percent of those at home reported similar feelings.

It was anticipated that more positive answers toward parents might be expressed at home than at school. However, on the five questions about relations with parents, the location of the interview did not introduce a response effect.

ATTITUDES TOWARD DEVIANT OR ILLEGAL BEHAVIOR

A series of questions measured the adolescents' perceptions of the acceptance or rejection of deviant behavior among their peers, and their attitudes toward smoking marijuana and taking sleeping pills. Three projective questions asked respondents how they thought most of their friends would feel if someone they knew got drunk, cheated on a test, or took something expensive from a store. Three other questions measured the extent of tolerance for certain behaviors related to illegal drugs, ranging from smoking a little grass at a party to taking a drug with a needle.

Results show that differences in responses given at school and at home to these questions were not statistically significant. Attitudinal questions about illegal drugs apparently were no more threatening than questions about other illegal or deviant behavior, and none of the differences in responses given at home and at school were statistically significant.

REPORTED USE OF LEGAL AND ILLEGAL DRUGS

In a series of questions on the extent of their use of legal drugs, students were asked if they took either diet pills or sleeping pills on a doctor's prescription, and if they drank alcohol or smoked cigarettes. None of the differences in reported use between school and home were statistically significant.

Questions about personal use of seven illegal drugs ranging from marijuana to heroin were considered to be the most threatening in the study and most likely to be influenced by the setting of the interview: How students answered in the two settings would test the degree to which they accepted assurances that their answers were confidential. Although students reported more use of each of the seven drugs when asked at school than at home, it is of special interest that none of the reported differences were statistically significant.

Prior to the experiment, it was thought that the presence of parents or others in the home, and especially in the room during the interview, would bias the responses toward lower reported drug use. However, those students who were interviewed while no one else was in the house reported no more drug use than those students interviewed while others were at home during the interview. In fact, the 52 students whose parents remained in the room during the interview reported just as much drug use as those who were alone in the house. From these results, it appears that the respondents believed that their answers would be held in confidence and did not feel threatened by the presence of their parents.

The relatively small difference between results obtained at school and at home raised this question: Why was there little difference between these results as compared to those obtained by Kandel (1975), who found almost no reported drug use among adolescents interviewed at home? The methods of administration in Kandel's study and the present one were the same (self-administered questionnaires) so the explanation might lie in the characteristics of the populations studied.

The populations for the two studies were very different. Kandel studied frequent absentees; 45 percent of her home sample were students who had been absent 16 or more days since the beginning of the semester compared with 14 percent of the students in this study who were interviewed at home. Kandel's students were primarily Puerto Rican and black from a poor area in New York City. Judging from a high refusal rate of 31 percent, she had a highly suspicious and possibly hostile population. On the other hand, students in this study were mostly white, middle-class youths living in a community outside New York City, whose fathers were predominantly white-collar employees. The low refusal rate (0.3 percent) indicates that they may have been less suspicious.

Special studies among frequently absent students have found that absentees report considerably more use of all types of drugs than regularly attending students (Kandel, 1975; Zanes, 1977). Data from this experiment were analyzed by self-reported number of days absent. Although the number of students in the frequently absent category (absent 16 days or more for a school term) was small, we found higher drug use among them (Table 2). However, what is more pertinent to this experiment is that a statistically significant difference in drug use by frequent absentees was reported when students answered at school rather than at home; considerably more drug use, both legal and illegal, was reported by frequent absentees on questionnaires filled in at school than at home.

Discussion

In this experiment among white middle-class students to determine if the setting influenced responses, it was found that questions which were considered a priori to be most threatening were less influenced by the setting than questions considered less threatening.

Table 2. Drug Use by Number of Days Absent Reported in School and Home Settings, 1972

	Days Absent								
	15 Days or Less			*16 Days or More*			*Total*		
	School (N=212)	*Home (N=205)*	*Differ-ence*	*School (N=25)*	*Home (N=33)*	*Differ-ence*	*School (N=237)*	*Home (N=238)*	*Differ-ence*
Drink Alcohol once a week or more often	28%	26%	2%	60%	42%	18%	31%	28%	3%
Smoke cigarettes currently	28	31	−3	56	46	10	31	33	−2
Use within last 60 days									
Marijuana	36	33	3	72	58	14	40	37	3
Barbiturates	10	7	3	40	27	13	13	10	3
Amphetamines	3	2	1	28	12	16	6	3	3
LSD/psychedlics	2	1	1	20	6	14	4	2	2
Cocaine	5	1	4	20	6	14	7	2	5
Glue	3	1	2	8	—	8	3	1	2
Heroin	1	—	1	8	—	8	2	—	2
Average difference			2%			13%*			3%

* $p < .01$

NOTE: Percentages are based on the number of students responding to each question; this number varied by question.

Statistically significant differences were found in answers to questions about attitudes toward school and about respondents' mood, whereas differences in responses given at home and at school to the personal use of illegal drugs were not statistically significant.

Just why more students expressed negative attitudes about school when they were questioned in school than at home is not clear. One possible explanation is that questions about school are more salient when the youth actually are in school. Instead of the differences in results representing a response error, the differences in results may reflect the respondents' true feelings which are different in the two locations. The school setting may evoke an awareness of their attitudes toward school which they may be less conscious of when they are elsewhere. Similarly, the questions on mood may be an honest reflection of how the students feel in school in contrast to how they feel at home.

It is only among the frequently absent students that a statistically significant difference occurs in the amount of drug use reported at home and school. Perhaps students who regularly attend school feel less threatened than frequent absentees, and perhaps the white middle-class juniors in this experiment were less concerned about their anonymity than younger students of different ethnic and socioeconomic background as in Kandel's sample.

This experiment indicates that the setting may influence results in areas that had not been anticipated by the investigator, and that the response effect is closely related to the characteristics of the population under study.

References

Elinson, Jack, Eric Josephson, Anne Zanes, and Paul Haberman
1977 Final Report: A Study of Teen-Age Drug Behavior. Center for Socio-Cultural Research on Drug Use and Division of Sociomedical Sciences, School of Public Health, Columbia University.

Kandel, Denise
1975 "Reaching the hard to reach: illicit drug use among high school absentees." Addictive Diseases: An International Journal 1:465–80.

Sudman, Seymour, and Norman Bradburn
1974 Response Effects in Surveys: A Review and Synthesis. Chicago: Aldine.

Zanes, Anne
1977 "Absenteeism and Drug Use in an East Coast and a West Coast School." Final Report: A Study of Teen-Age Drug Behavior, Center for Socio-Cultural Research on Drug Use and Division of Sociomedical Sciences, School of Public Health, Columbia University.

The Polls:
Public Attitudes Toward the Energy Crisis

AL RICHMAN

DESPITE the gas lines and the president's warnings, most Americans remain doubtful that there is a "real" oil shortage stemming from a genuine depletion of oil resources. Their predominant view is that oil shortages have been contrived, particularly by the oil companies, to raise prices and profits. Americans believe that the oil companies and oil-producing countries could provide all the gasoline that's wanted for the near future.

As for the long term, Americans are optimistic that technology will lead us to the development of new energy sources and less dependence on foreign oil. By the year 1990, oil and gas are expected to be superseded by coal, nuclear, and solar power as leading U.S. sources of energy. By the year 2000, solar power is expected to emerge as our major source.

The public's attitudes toward nuclear power, in the wake of the Three-Mile Island accident, can be summarized as favoring (1) continued operation of existing plants while introducing stricter safety and inspection regulations as investigations show the need, and (2) postponement of new plant construction until safety issues are resolved.

The American public's attitudes toward the energy crisis are reviewed below in two sections. The first examines what the polls tell us about public perceptions of the energy problem. The second describes the public's preferences on how to deal with the energy problem, including its attitudes toward energy development and conservation policies.

Public Perceptions of the Energy Problem

Despite the recent shortages, the increased prices of gasoline, and numerous speeches by the president on the criticalness of the energy problem, the proportion of Americans in mid-1979 who believed that the energy shortage was "real"—about one-third—was actually less than the proportion who held this view after the president launched his energy program two years before.

Al Richman is an Associate Public Opinions Analyst with the U.S. Department of State. The views expressed here are those of the author, not necessarily those of the Department of State.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1979 by The Trustees of Columbia University
Published by Elsevier North-Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/79/0043-576/$1.75

Most Americans continue to believe that oil shortages are contrived by oil companies and oil-producing countries to increase their revenues.

The public's persistent skepticism about the scarcity of oil is shown by the successive responses to these CBS/New York *Times* and Roper polls:

CBS/New York Times

Do you think the shortage of energy we hear about is real or are we just being told there are shortages so oil and gas companies can charge higher prices? (July 1977–April 1978)

Do you think the shortage of oil we hear about is real or are we just being told there are shortages so oil companies can charge higher prices? (March 1979)

Do you think the shortage of oil we hear about is real, or are we just being told there are shortages? (June 1979–July 1979)

		Real	*Just Being Told*	*No Opinion*
1977:	July 27–31	38%	49%	13%
	Oct 23–26	42	51	7
1978:	Jan 8–12	43	47	10
	Apr 3–7	42	50	8
1979:	Mar 26–27	20	69	11
	June 3–6	30	62	8
	July 9–11	26	66	8
	July 16	35	53	12

President Carter has told us that we are running out of oil. Do you think things are as bad as the president said, or do you think things are not as bad as all that? [For July 1977 and April 1979 polls question reads ". . . oil and natural gas . . ."]

		As Bad	*Not As Bad*	*No Opinion*
1977:	July 27–31	33%	57%	10%
1979:	Apr 5–7	32	57	11
	June 3–6	25	69	6

Roper

Some people say there is a real shortage of gasoline and fuel oil because demand has outrun the supply. Others say there really isn't a shortage of gasoline and fuel oil and the big companies are holding it back for their own advantage. What do you think—that there is or is not a real shortage of gasoline and oil?

		Real Shortage	*Not a Real Shortage*	*Don't Know*
1974:	Feb	18%	73%	9%
1979:	June 2–9	20	71	9
	July 7–14	24	68	8
	Aug 18–25	27	65	8

Here is a list of statements about the gasoline and oil shortage [respondent given card]. Which *one* of those statements comes closest to expressing your opinion?

A. There is a very real shortage and the problem will get worse during the next 5 to 10 years.

B. There is a real oil shortage but it will be solved in the next year or two.

C. There was a short-term problem, but it has been largely solved and there is no real problem any longer.

D. There never was any real oil shortage—it was contrived for economical and political reasons.

		Statements				*Don't*
		A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*Know*
1974:	May	21%	12%	8%	53%	6%
1976:	May 8–15	25	9	9	48	9
	Nov 6–11	26	11	8	46	9
1977:	Apr 30–May 7	40	15	6	33	6
	Oct 29–Nov 5	33	14	9	39	5
1978:	Apr 22–May 3	32	8	9	45	6
	Oct 28–Nov 4	31	10	9	43	7
1979:	Jan 6–20	29	8	8	48	7
	Apr 28–May 5	25	12	6	51	6
	Sep 22–29	28	9	7	51	5

Public concern about world oil scarcity and U.S. dependence on foreign oil has lessened, even as concern about short-term energy shortages has increased. Roper found that the proportion who believed "the world's supply of oil" would last 100 years or more nearly doubled between early 1977 and early 1979 (from 22 to 40 percent), while the proportion who expected the world's oil supply to be depleted within 25 years fell from 24 percent to 15 percent.

Despite the president's warnings about excessive U.S. reliance on foreign oil, public concern about the degree of U.S. dependence on oil imports declined between 1977 and 1979. The proportion who believed that the United States was importing 35 percent or more of the oil it consumes dropped between early 1977 and early 1979 (from 56 percent to 43 percent), while the proportion who believed that the U.S. was importing less than 35 percent of its oil rose sharply (from 24 percent to 41 percent).

An early 1979 Roper poll found that only about one-fourth of the general public had an even roughly accurate perception that "between 35 and 49 percent" of the oil used in the United States is imported. Even among the college-educated, executives/professionals, and those earning $25,000 or more annually only about one-third were aware of the extent of U.S. oil dependence.

The public also has become considerably more optimistic since 1977 about the possibility of ending U.S. dependence on foreign oil. The proportion who said the U.S. could "get along without" importing foreign oil during the next five years by better conservation and development of new energy sources increased from 37 percent in mid-1977 to 50 percent in mid-1979.

Only about one-fifth of the public was convinced both about U.S. oil dependence and a worldwide oil scarcity, according to a Roper survey conducted in March 1979. Nearly twice as many were optimistic about supplies, believing these were adequate worldwide for at least another 50 years and that the United States itself could become self-sufficient in oil.

Roper

About how long do you think the world's supply of oil is likely to last—5 years, or 25 years, or 50 years, or 100 years, or 200 years, or what?

Number of Years	*Mar 1979*		*Feb 1977*	
5	2%	15%	4%	24%
25	13		20	
50	13		15	
75	3		3	
100	15	40	10	33
150	3		1	
200	9		4	
Longer than 200 ~~years~~ (Volunteered)	13		7	
Don't know	29		35	

At the present time, how much of the oil used in the United States would you say we have to import from other countries? [Respondent shown card with choices ranging from "less than 10 percent" to "50 percent or more."]

	Jan 1979		*Jan 1978*		*Jan 1977*	
Less than 10%	5%	41%	3%	28%	2%	24%
10 to 24%	14		9		7	
25 to 34%	22		16		15	
35 to 49%	23	43	27	57	29	56
50% or more	20		30		27	
Don't know	17		16		21	

How do you feel about our dependency on foreign oil during the next five years—do you think we could get along without it by conservation and use of other energy sources, or that we cannot get along without importing foreign oil?

	Can Get Along Without Foreign Oil	*Cannot Get Along Without It*	*Don't Know*
1975: Apr 5–12	50%	35%	15%
1976: Mar 20–27	37	48	15
1977: Mar 19–26	38	50	12
June 4–11	37	53	10
1978: Mar 18–25	38	48	14
1979: Mar 24–31	41	49	10
Apr 28–May 5	50	42	8

Gallup

From what you have heard or read, do you think we produce enough oil in this country to meet our present energy needs, or do we have to import some oil from other countries? [For April 1978 poll questions reads "import oil . . ."]

	Produce Enough	*Must Import*	*Don't Know*
1977: Apr 29–May 1	33%	52%	15%
1978: Apr 14–17	27	60	13
1979: Apr 27–May 4	38	46	16

CBS/New York Times

Do you think the United States has to import oil to meet our needs, or do we produce as much oil as we need?

	Produce What We Need	Must Import	No Opinion
1979: June 3–6	36%	51%	13%

Numerous surveys show the public has usually ranked oil companies as the foremost cause of energy shortages. But also receiving considerable blame have been the oil-producing countries, President Carter, the Congress, and wasteful American consumption habits.

Analysis of a June 1979 CBS/*Times* poll showed that those Americans who believed there was a real scarcity of oil attributed it mainly to Americans' wasteful consumption of energy. In contrast, those who viewed the oil shortage as contrived placed most blame on American oil companies. The president received more blame from those who believed the oil shortage was contrived than from those who said it was "real."

CBS/New York Times

We are interested in who or what is to blame for the oil shortage we hear about. Would you place a lot of the blame or not much for the problem on . . . [For July 1977 poll question reads ". . . we are interested in who or what is responsible for the energy problem we are facing. Would you place a lot of the blame or not much for the energy problem on . . ."]

	Percent "A Lot" of Blame		
	July 9–11 1979	June 3–6 1979	July 19–25 1977
American oil companies	65%	69%	57%
Middle East oil-producing countries	56	47	44
Waste by people like yourself	—	58	62
The president (Jul 1977: President Carter)	35	33	19
Congress	—	59	51

Roper

Here is a list of groups who have been mentioned in one way or another as being to blame for the current energy crisis here in the United States. [Respondent handed card.] Would you go down that list and for each one tell me whether you think they deserve major blame for the energy crisis, some blame, or no blame at all?

	Percent "Major" Blame				
	June 1979	June 1977	Jan 1976	Feb 1975	Jan 1974
The oil companies	72%	55%	57%	57%	56%
The Arab countries	51	32	37	38	22
The Administration	36	24	28	28	39
The Congress	34	28	26	26	26
The electric power companies	25	31	29	26	15
American consumers	23	31	18	20	18
Israel	17	10	13	10	11
The environmentalists	15	13	9	11	10

In their poll of July 9–11, 1979, CBS/*Times* asked their respondents about difficulties in obtaining gasoline. One-third reported that, during the previous month, they had experienced either long lines or trouble finding gas stations open. The table below shows that those who had difficulties in getting gasoline were less convinced the energy shortage was "real" than those who had no difficulty. However, those who had difficulty in obtaining gasoline were more likely to blame the president for the scarcity than those who had no difficulty.

	Experience in Getting Gasoline	
	Difficulty (34% of public)	*No Difficulty (55% of public)*
Belief about oil shortage		
Real	24%	29%
Not real	70	62
No opinion	6	9
Blame president for shortage		
A lot	41%	30%
Not much	53	63
No opinion	6	7

Public Preferences About How to Deal With the Energy Problem

Public disbelief that the U.S. faces a severe energy shortage rests, in part, on its firm belief that American know-how will provide alternative energy sources within a decade.

The public expects oil and gas to be superseded by coal, nuclear, and solar power as leading U.S. sources of energy within 10 years. This helps explain why the public is relatively unworried about a long-term scarcity of oil and gas supplies. Since the public expects reliance on oil and gas to decline rapidly, it is optimistic that our reserves of oil and gas are adequate to last well into the next century.

An April Harris poll found that the public expects: (1) coal will become the chief U.S. energy source in the early 1980s; (2) nuclear and solar power will subsequently replace coal, becoming the two leading energy sources in the late 1980s; and (3) solar power will emerge as the primary source of U.S. energy by the year 2000.

Harris (Mar 24–Apr 2, 1979)

Generally speaking, how optimistic are you about the ability of this country to solve the energy problem by technological discoveries and developments—very optimistic, somewhat optimistic, or not optimistic at all?

Very optimistic	43%	86%
Somewhat optimistic	43	
Not optimistic at all	7	
Not sure	7	

Harris (April 6–9, 1979)

Now let me ask you about different kinds of energy—oil, coal, nuclear power, solar energy, hydroelectric power, and natural gas. Which one of these fuels do you think will supply most of our electrical energy needs this year, in 2–5 years, in 6–10 years, in 11–15 years. . . ?

	Main U. S. Energy Source					
	This Year	*2–5 Years*	*6–10 Years*	*11–15 Years*	*16–20 Years*	*More than 20 Years*
Oil	33%	17%	7%	3%	3%	3%
Natural gas	22	12	7	5	4	4
Coal	18	23	16	14	11	8
Nuclear power	9	18	29	29	29	27
Solar energy	5	17	25	27	29	32
Hydroelectric power	7	6	4	4	3	3
Not sure	6	7	12	18	21	23
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Roper

Which of these energy sources do you think are realistically possible to use for replacing foreign oil during the next five years? (Respondent handed card.)

Looking ahead to the year 2000, which of those sources do you think offers the best long-term source of energy—which one or two do you think we should spend the greatest effort on to develop?

	Best Alternative Energy Sources (Multiple Responses)				
	Short-Term			*Long-Term*	
	May 1979	*Mar 1979*	*Mar 1977*	*Mar 1979*	*Mar 1977*
Coal	60%	68%	61%	26%	18%
Solar energy	53	65	52	68	67
Nuclear energy	35	50	36	37	35
Oil from offshore U. S. oil wells	35	51	42	14	12
Oil extracted from shale	20	25	16	4	3
Water power from dams on rivers	26	37	26	11	7
Wind power	17	22	16	6	8
Energy from ocean tides	10	15	9	7	6
None of these (Volunteered)'	1	1	1	—	—
Don't know	5	5	6	5	7
	262%	339%	265%	178%	163%

Harris surveys found that the proportion of Americans who preferred to cope with the energy problem by increasing domestic production rose substantially between mid-1977 and late 1978, and—on the latest reading—outnumbered those who favored conservation approaches by nearly two to one.

Harris

If you had to choose, which do you think should have the primary emphasis in dealing with the energy problem in this country—going all out to cut back the use of energy in the U.S. or going all out to increase the production of energy in the U.S.?

Preferred Policy	*Dec 1978*	*Mar 1978*	*May 1977*
Increase energy production	57%	46%	41%
Conserve energy use	30	26	32
Both (Volunteered)	10	24	23
Not sure	3	4	4

A Roper survey in late March asked respondents whether they favored or opposed a number of specific energy production and conservation policies. Roper found that majorities of Americans favored most steps to accelerate development of energy sources (e.g., solar energy—85 percent favored, offshore oil exploration—80 percent, nuclear energy—57 percent), but majorities opposed most measures to conserve energy (e.g., penalty taxes on appliances using large amounts of electricity—75 percent opposed, substantially higher prices for peak-time energy use—68 percent, oil and gas rationing—59 percent).

The public seems to be more concerned about the price of oil than about its long-term availability. In March, Roper found that the public overwhelmingly opposed the idea of permitting oil and gas prices to rise in order to encourage development of additional supplies (by 76 percent to 16 percent). In late April, NBC found that the public clearly opposed "lifting price controls on crude oil" (37 percent in favor vs. 50 percent opposed), but overwhelmingly favored a "new tax to keep oil companies from reaping so-called windfall profits after the removal of oil price controls" (66 percent in favor vs. 24 percent opposed).

The public's opposition to decontrol of oil prices is enhanced by doubts that higher prices for oil would induce the oil companies to find more of it. CBS/*Times* asked this question April 5–7:

If prices for oil are increased, do you think it's likely that oil companies will put much more effort in trying to discover more oil, or will they continue to do what they are doing now?"

Same effort to discover oil	56%
Greater effort	32
No opinion	12

Willingness to follow the president's lead on the energy problem depends, to a considerable extent, on acceptance that a real scarcity of oil exists, relative to worldwide demand. In the CBS/*Times* poll of July 16, 1979, a majority, albeit small, of those who said the oil shortage was "real" approved of the president's "handling of the energy problem" (by 51 percent to 37 percent). But among those who felt the shortage was fabricated, a majority of nearly three to one disapproved (by 60 percent to 22 percent).

The immediate effect of the Three-Mile Island accident was to heighten the public's doubts about U.S. reliance on nuclear power. A Gallup survey in early April 1979, found that a majority of Americans (72 percent) believed similar nuclear plant accidents were likely to occur in other nuclear plants. At the same time, a CBS/*Times* poll found that 36 percent of the public feared such an accident could lead to a Hiroshima-type atomic explosion.

Public support for building additional nuclear power plants declined sharply immediately after the Three-Mile Island accident and has only partially recovered. In October 1978, Harris found nearly a two-to-one majority favored constructing new nuclear plants in the U.S. (57 percent favored vs. 31 percent opposed). In early April 1979, two weeks after the accident, the public was about evenly divided (44 percent vs. 43 percent). By mid-May, support for building new plants had recovered slightly (52 percent vs. 42 percent).

Harris found support for constructing new nuclear plants was much greater under the conditions that the government regularly inspect them and assure that an accident was "unlikely to happen" (58 percent approved vs. 36 percent disapproved on Harris's April 6–9 survey).

The public's concern for personal safety was even more evident in the sizeable and growing opposition to having a nuclear power plant built near one's own community. In early April 1979, Gallup found that the public opposed constructing a nearby nuclear plant by nearly two to one, compared to mid-1976, when the public was almost evenly divided on this issue.

However, the public's concern about energy prices and shortages has predominated when the issue shifted to closing existing plants. A Gallup poll in early May 1979, found a clear majority of the public believed that closing nuclear plants presented a "greater risk to the nation" than keeping them open (by 56 percent to 31 percent).

Harris polls in April and May 1979 showed that the public overwhelmingly opposed the "permanent" closing of all nuclear power plants (by 79 percent to 15 percent in May). A clear majority (54 percent to 43 percent) also opposed closing all plants pending completion of investigations into their safety hazards. (However, responses may be influenced by the fact that most people do not have an existing nuclear plant near their home.)

Although the public does not approve "closing" all nuclear plants, it has favored "cutting back" their operations, as necessary, until stricter safety regulations are introduced (by 66 percent to 24 percent), according to Gallup's April 1979 poll.

Harris

In general, do you favor or oppose the building of more nuclear power plants in the United States?

		Favor	*Oppose*	*Don't Know*
1975:	Mar	63%	19%	18%
1976:	July	61	22	17
1978:	Mar 24–Apr 2	55	25	20
	Sept 24–Oct 4	57	31	12
1979:	Apr 4–5	52	42	6
	Apr 6–9 (Telephone survey)	47	45	8
	Apr 6–15 (Personal interviews)	44	43	13
	May 18–22	52	42	6

CBS/New York Times

Would you approve or disapprove of building more nuclear power plants to generate electricity?

Would you approve or disapprove if the nuclear plants for generating electricity are built in your community?

	Nuclear Plants in United States			*Nuclear Plants in Own Community*		
	Approve	*Dis-approve*	*No Opinion*	*Approve*	*Dis-approve*	*No Opinion*
1977: July 27–31	69%	21%	10%	55%	33%	12%
1979: Apr 5–7	46	41	13	38	56	6

Gallup

As of today, how do you feel about the construction of a nuclear power plant in this area—that is, within five miles of here? Would you be against the construction of such a plant in your area, or not?

Nuclear Plant in Own Area	*April 6–9 1979*	*June 11–14 1976*
Would be against	62%	45%
Would not be against	33	42
No opinion	5	13

Harris

Considering the accident in that Pennsylvania nuclear power plant, do you approve or disapprove of the following policies?

	May 18–22, 1979			*Apr 6–9, 1979*		
	Dis-approve	*Ap-prove*	*Not Sure*	*Dis-approve*	*Ap-prove*	*Not Sure*
All nuclear power plants should be shut down permanently and no more should be allowed to be built.	79%	15%	6%	80%	15%	5%
All nuclear power plants in the country should be closed down until the Federal Government knows more about the safety risks involved in them.	54	43	3	57	40	3

Gallup (April 6–9, 1979)

Do you feel that nuclear power plants operating today are safe enough with present safety regulations, or do you feel that their operations should be cut back until more strict regulations can be put into practice?

Cut back operations	66%
Plants now safe enough	24
No opinion	10

POPQAE 44(1) 1–140 (1980)
ISSN 0033-362X

A0610 1

Public Opinion Quarterly

Does Where You Stand Depend on When You Were Born? The Impact of Generation on Post-Vietnam Foreign Policy Beliefs
Ole R. Holsti and James N. Rosenau

Chinese Politics in the General Assembly *Trong R. Chai*

Changes in Family Life in Middletown, 1924–77 *Howard M. Bahr*

Time of Decision and Media Use During the Ford-Carter Campaign
Steven H. Chaffee and Sun Yuel Choe

The Measurement of a Middle Position in Attitude Surveys
Stanley Presser and Howard Schuman

Procedures for Evaluating Trends in Public Opinion *D Garth Taylor*

Optimal Times to Contact Sample Households
M. F. Weeks, B. L. Jones, R. E. Folsom, Jr., and C. H. Benrud

THE POLLS: Changing Attitudes Toward Euthanasia
John M. Ostheimer

COMMENTS AND LETTERS • NEWS AND NOTES • BOOK REVIEWS
REPORT ON THE POQ READERSHIP SURVEY

SPRING 1980

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

The Public Opinion Quarterly

ORGAN OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH
EDITORIALLY SPONSORED BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION
ALLEN BARTON W. PHILLIPS DAVISON HARVEY C. MANSFIELD
ROBERT K. MERTON FREDERICK T. C. YU

Editor: ELEANOR SINGER
Managing Editor: INA C. JAEGER
Department Editors:
PHILIP A. HARDING, *News and Notes*
MARC B. GLASSMAN, *Book Reviews*
Editorial Assistants:
LAURA VALENSTEIN
NANCY JALET

EDITORIAL BOARD

LEO BOGART
STEVEN R. BROWN
ROBERT O. CARLSON
STEVEN H. CHAFFEE
STEVEN M. COHEN
PHILIP E. CONVERSE
JAMES A. DAVIS
MARTIN R. FRANKEL
HERBERT J. GANS
NORVAL D. GLENN
JOHN HAMMOND
EUGENE L. HARTLEY
MATHEW HAUCK
HERBERT H. HYMAN
ELIHU KATZ
JOSEPH T. KLAPPER
HERBERT E. KRUGMAN
EVERETT LADD
KENNETH C. LAND
GLADYS ENGEL LANG
NATHAN MACCOBY
HERBERT MCCLOSKY
WILLIAM J. MCGUIRE
JOHN P. ROBINSON
HOWARD SCHUMAN
SEYMOUR SUDMAN
CAROL H. WEISS
CHARLES R. WRIGHT
JUNE CHRIST, *AAPOR Representative*

Volume #44, 4 issues (1980)

© 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University. Published quarterly by Elsevier North Holland, Inc. New York. Second-class postage paid at New York, New York and at additional mailing offices. Institutional subscription price per year $25.00 (Volume #44, 1980). Individual subscription for subscriber's own personal use $13.00 (payment must accompany order). Foreign subscribers must add an additional $4.00 per volume for postage (surface mail) and handling, $10.00 for air mail to Europe and Canada, $16.00 for air mail outside the U.S., Canada, or Europe.

Mail orders and direct subscription information to:
Michael Torzewski
Subscription Department
Elsevier North Holland, Inc.
52 Vanderbilt Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Single copy and back volume information furnished upon written request. Claims for missing issues can be honored only up to three months from date of issue. Indexed by Public Affairs Information Services, Social Sciences Index, United States Political Science Documents, and Combined Retrospective Index Sets (CRIS).

PUBLICATION NUMBER 449380

Editorial Office: Journalism Building, Columbia University 116th Street and Broadway, New York, New York 10027
Business, Subscriptions, Back Issues: Elsevier North Holland, Inc. 52 Vanderbilt Avenue New York, New York 10017
AAPOR: Post Office Box 17, Princeton, New Jersey 08540
Subscribers and members of AAPOR are urged to notify the Subscription Office as soon as possible of changes of address. In doing so, give the old as well as the new address.

PUBLISHED BY ELSEVIER NORTH HOLLAND, INC.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

The Public Opinion Quarterly

VOLUME 44 SPRING 1980 NUMBER 1

Does Where You Stand Depend on When You Were Born? The Impact of Generation on Post-Vietnam Foreign Policy Beliefs *Ole R. Holsti and James N. Rosenau* 1

Chinese Politics in the General Assembly *Trong R. Chai* 23

Changes in Family Life in Middletown, 1924–77 *Howard M. Bahr* 35

Time of Decision and Media Use During the Ford-Carter Campaign *Steven H. Chaffee and Sun Yuel Choe* 53

The Measurement of a Middle Position in Attitude Surveys *Stanley Presser and Howard Schuman* 70

Procedures for Evaluating Trends in Public Opinion *D Garth Taylor* 86

Optimal Times to Contact Sample Households *M. F. Weeks, B. L. Jones, R. E. Folsom, Jr., and C. H. Benrud* 101

COMMENTS AND LETTERS 115

NEWS AND NOTES *Philip A. Harding* 118

THE POLLS: Changing Attitudes Toward Euthanasia *John M. Ostheimer* 123

Report on the POQ Readership Survey *Eleanor Singer and Marc B. Glassman* 129

BOOK REVIEWS

Mariann Pezzella Winnick and Charles Winnick, *The Television Experience: What Children See* *Paul Messaris* 134

George F. Bishop, Robert G. Meadow, and Marilyn Jackson-Beeck, eds., *The Presidential Debates: Media, Electoral and Policy Perspectives* *Harold Mendelsohn* 135

Kaarle Nordenstreng, and Herbert I. Schiller, eds., *National Sovereignty and International Communication: A Reader* *Daniel Lerner* 137

Edwin Diamond, *Good News, Bad News* *Gaye Tuchman* 138

Heinz-Dietrich Fischer, *Reeducations und Pressepolitik unter britischem Besatzungsstatus: Die Zonenzeitung "Die Welt"* *W. Phillips Davison* 140

◆

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

Authors should submit two copies of their articles and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope if they wish them returned. Bibliographic references, footnotes, and tables should be typed to conform to the printed style of this journal. Authors are urged to consult recent issues before submitting articles.

Upon acceptance of an article by the journal, the author(s) will be asked to transfer copyright in the article to the publisher. This transfer will insure the widest possible dissemination of information under the U.S. Copyright Law.

The PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY is hospitable to all points of view, provided that the material presented will help to illuminate problems of communication and public opinion. The American Association for Public Opinion Research assumes responsibility only for material signed by an officer of the Association in his official capacity. Statements of fact and opinion are made on the responsibility of the authors alone and do not represent the views of the editors.

The PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY has been registered with the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc. Consent is given for copying of articles for personal or internal use, or for the personal or internal use of specific clients. This consent is given on the condition that the copier pay through the Center the per-copy fee stated in the code on the first page of each article for copying beyond that permitted by the U.S. Copyright Law. If no code appears on an article, the author has not given broad consent to copy and permission to copy must be obtained directly from the author. All articles published prior to 1978 may be copied for a per-copy fee of $1.00, also payable through the Center. This consent does not extend to other kinds of copying, such as for general distribution, resale, advertising and promotional purposes, or for creating new collective works.

Does Where You Stand Depend on When You Were Born? The Impact of Generation on Post-Vietnam Foreign Policy Beliefs

OLE R. HOLSTI AND JAMES N. ROSENAU

SOME YEARS AGO Karl Mannheim suggested that generation is one of the more important factors shaping social beliefs and action. "The fact of belonging to the same class, and that of belonging to the same generation or age group, have this in common, that both endow the individual with a common location in the social and historical process, and thereby limit them to a specific range of experiences, predisposing them for a certain characteristic mode of thought and experience, and a characteristic type of historically relevant action" (Mannheim, 1951:291). Mannheim's observation has not gone unheeded. In recent years the concept of generation has been central in such diverse studies as the political right in interwar Finland, a proposed new

---

Abstract American involvement in Vietnam and its attending domestic conflict have generated a good deal of speculation about generational differences and, more specifically, about the divergent "lessons" that Americans of different ages have drawn from the most salient foreign policy episodes they have experienced. The most visible lines of cleavage have quite often been described as falling between those whose views were shaped by the events leading up to World War II, on the one hand, and, on the other, those whose outlook has been molded by the war in Southeast Asia. Using data from questionnaire responses of 2,282 American leaders in various occupations, this article assesses the validity of the "Munich generation versus Vietnam generation" thesis. The findings indicate that the most salient cleavages on foreign policy exist *between* occupations and *within* generation, rather than vice versa. The article concludes with a discussion of the prospects for early achievement of domestic consensus on issues of international politics and American foreign policy.

Ole R. Holsti is George V. Allen Professor and Chairman in the Department of Political Science at Duke University. James N. Rosenau is Director of the Institute of Transnational Studies at the University of Southern California. For support of this research the authors are indebted to the Research Council and The Computation Center, Duke University, the Institute for Transnational Studies, University of Southern California, and the Committee on Research at the University of California at Davis.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University

Published by Elsevier North Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/80/0044-001/$1.75

paradigm for the entire course of American history, the Sino-Soviet conflict, and the political views of American students (Rintala, 1962; Huntington, 1974; Taylor and Wood, 1966; Lipset and Ladd, 1971). And as this concept's prominence in social research has grown, it has spawned a critical literature and several controversies.[1]

American involvement in Vietnam and its attending domestic conflict have generated a good deal of speculation about generational differences and, more specifically, about the divergent "lessons" that Americans of different ages have drawn from the most salient foreign policy episodes they have experienced. The most visible lines of cleavage have quite often been described as falling between those whose views were shaped by the events leading up to World War II, on the one hand, and, on the other, those whose outlook has been molded by the war in Southeast Asia.[2] The interpretation that links contemporary lack of consensus on matters of foreign policy to the "lessons" that each generation has adduced from dramatic and traumatic episodes has been summarized by the current White House National Security Adviser: "There is a tendency in America to be traumatized by international difficulties. The generation of the nineteen-forties was always thinking about the failure of the League of Nations. I'm talking about leadership groups now. The leadership of the sixties was always thinking about Munich. Now there is a generation worried by Vietnam, with consequences of self-imposed paralysis, which is likely to be costlier in the long run" (Brzezinski, quoted in Drew, 1978:116–17).

To be more specific, the thesis of the "Munich generation versus Vietnam generation" usually takes some variant of the following line of reasoning. Those who experienced the bitter fruits of appeasement and American isolationism during the 1930s tended to identify the Munich conference of 1938 as the paradigmatic example of how not to deal with expansionist totalitarian regimes. When faced after World War II with the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe, the absence of hoped-for liberalization within the USSR, as well as periodic crises in Berlin and elsewhere, persons of this generation were prepared to support an active American foreign policy to meet challenges from the Soviet Union and its allies.

The argument goes on to suggest that persons of a more recent generation—for whom World War II and its genesis as well as the origins of the Cold War are merely a part of past history rather than episodes experienced firsthand—are more likely to look to the war in Southeast Asia as a source of guidance on the proper and improper conduct of foreign relations. According to this description of contemporary American society, then, what the fathers regard as indispensable commitments to maintain a viable world order, their sons view as indiscriminate undertakings against ill-defined—often phantom—threats that have little relationship to legitimate American interests, let alone the propagation or preservation of democratic institutions abroad.[3] This is, of course, a vastly oversimplified summary of an often complex argument. Nevertheless, even if it is something of a caricature, it does capture some central elements of the thesis that in important respects the cleavages on foreign policy issues in this country systematically pit the world views of one generation against those of another.

---

[1] See especially Spitzer (1973).

[2] On generational cleavages, see Allison (1970–71), Roskin (1974), and Handberg (1972–73). Also useful on the effects of generation are Russett (1975), Bobrow and Cutler (1967), and Cutler (1970). For the importance of history as a source of "lessons," see May (1973), and Jervis (1976).

The generational argument, if valid, has some important implications for the future conduct of this nation's external relations because it suggests that members of the "Vietnam generation," as they achieve positions of leadership and influence during the next several decades, will bring to their roles an intellectual baggage radically different from that of the leaders they are replacing. If the generational hypothesis is valid, moreover, the prognosis is that as the next generation of leaders replaces those currently in positions of influence, a new consensus will emerge in the not-too-distant future. Recall that persons who had reached voting age at the time of the Munich conference are now in the seventh decade of their lives.

However plausible the generational interpretation of lack of consensus on matters of foreign policy may be, it is not universally accepted. Both survey and voting data suggest that, at least within the public at large, cleavages do not fall quite so neatly along age lines. Thus, the image of a dovish or neo-isolationist generation of students demonstrating on campuses to protest the excessive foreign policy commitments of their elders is, according to some observers, a skewed, if not inaccurate, picture of contemporary American society. For example, analysis of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations poll failed to reveal striking differences among age groups. Of those under the age of 30, 30 percent were classified as "liberal internationalists," 32 percent as "conservative internationalists," and 38 percent as "noninternationalists." Indeed, compared to the 30–64 and over-64 age groups, those of the youngest generation were the most evenly distributed among these three categories.[4]

---

[3] An article on the African policy staff of the State Department described its leading members in this way: "The four are in the same age group—39–46—and they share a common experience of disillusionment with and then opposition to the Vietnam war. All remain highly skeptical about United States military involvement, direct and indirect, in areas where they feel the national interest is not obviously at stake." (Hovey, 1978:A3).

Even the more specific proposition that ties generational conflict to the war in Vietnam receives little support from polls conducted during the decade prior to the Paris agreement of January 1973. Indeed, the polls revealed that, compared to their elders, the younger respondents were consistently more inclined to support American policy in Southeast Asia, as well as to oppose withdrawal (Erskine, 1970: 144–45; Converse and Schuman, 1970: 24; Mueller, 1973: 136–40; and Lunch and Sperlich, 1970: 32–34).

However, at least some advocates of the "Munich generation versus Vietnam generation" thesis suggest that, whatever may be true of the public at large, it describes accurately the cleavages among elites, actual and emerging (Allison, 1970–71). This paper examines the generational thesis in the light of evidence from a survey of persons who occupy positions of leadership in various types of institutions, or who are likely to do so in the future.

Data and Methods

The data are derived from a questionnaire mailed to a sample of American leaders in various walks of life.[5] The questionnaire focuses upon (but is not limited to) three clusters of items relating to this nation's experience in Vietnam: Diagnoses of the sources of American failure, predictions about the consequences of the United States intervention in Southeast Asia, and prescriptions or "lessons" of the conflict that should guide the future conduct of American foreign policy. Over 150 articles, speeches, editorials, interviews, and press conferences served as a major source of questionnaire items.

In addition to asking the respondents to assess the "lessons of Vietnam" and the sources and consequences of American lack of success in Southeast Asia, we probed for their general orientations toward foreign policy and domestic politics as well as data about their personal backgrounds. To permit some cross-survey comparisons we included several questions that were also used in other recent surveys of American leaders. One multipart question on the goals and performance of American foreign policy is drawn from a study undertaken by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (Rielly, 1975). Several of our questions also appear in the Harvard–*Washington Post* survey (Sussman, 1976). Two other questions were drawn from the recent Russett-Hanson study of business executives and military officers, and we included one question that also appears in the Barton study of 500 American leaders of major interest groups (Russett and Hanson, 1975; Barton, 1974–75).

---

[4] Percentages recalculated from the data that appear in Mandelbaum and Schneider (1979:Table 1).

[5] A fuller discussion of the questionnaire, the sources from which it was constructed, and the sample may be found in Holsti and Rosenau (1976). The present paper is one of a series in which we explore the continuing effects of the Vietnam experience on the foreign policy beliefs of American leaders. Analyses to date indicate that respondents' positions on the war are the best predictor of present policy beliefs, even on issues that have nothing to do with Vietnam. For an elaboration, see Holsti and Rosenau (1979a and 1979b).

We had initially hoped to construct our sample from a single source encompassing persons in a variety of top leadership and subleadership positions. Unfortunately, no single source met all our requirements. Thus, the sample was constructed in ways that represented several types of compromises between the ideal and reality.

A random drawing of 2,000 persons listed in the most recent edition of *Who's Who in America* provided one part of the sample. *Who's Who* is a useful source because it includes biographical material and addresses for each person. The probability of a completed questionnaire being returned was assumed to be greater if received at home rather than at an office. If received at home it was also less likely to be passed on to a subordinate or colleague for completion.

Who's Who in America is not without some significant drawbacks, however. First, some groups are very heavily represented, especially business executives and educators, whereas military officers, labor leaders, the clergy, media persons, and several other groups of interest are underrepresented. The age and sex distributions in *Who's Who in America* may accurately mirror the leadership structure of American society, but the limited representation of women and younger persons made it less than adequate, given our interest in those occupying subleadership roles who lived through the Vietnam War and who are likely to move into top positions in the near future.

The second part of our sample was constructed on the basis of quotas for leaders from each of important groups that are underrepresented in *Who's Who:* Foreign Service officers, labor leaders, politicians, clergy, foreign affairs experts outside government, media leaders, and women. Names and addresses were drawn from various sources using random sampling procedures whenever feasible. In several cases the populations of interest were sufficiently small that all members were included. For example, all 105 chief editorial writers of newspapers with a circulation exceeding 100,000 were selected, as were all presidents of state labor organizations.

One of the largest occupational groups in the sample consisted of almost 900 military personnel, including both senior officers (colonels, and general officers, and their naval equivalents) then serving in the Pentagon, and junior officers then attending a service school. These officers had already been identified by their branches of the service as persons likely to achieve significant leadership positions during their military careers.

The first mailing in February 1976 yielded 1,899 completed questionnaires out of a total of 4,290 sent. In order to preserve their anonymity, respondents were asked to return the questionnaire to one address (a stamped, addressed envelope was provided for this purpose), and a postal card (also provided) acknowledging its completion to another. Names of those returning the postal card were removed from the list for a follow-up mailing sent out in April, which brought in another 383 completed questionnaires. Very limited research funds precluded a third mailing to the remaining nonrespondents.[6]

Fifty-three percent, or 2,282 of the questionnaire recipients, completed and returned the survey instrument.[7] The return rate may have been adversely affected by the length of the questionnaire and the atmosphere of distrust toward social science surveys prevalent in recent years.[8] As a partial test of sample representativeness we compared responses to the two mailings. We assumed that those who had to be prodded a second time sufficiently resembled those who did not respond at all. If the 383 second-mailing respondents differed significantly from their 1,899 counterparts in the first mailing, concern that the sample was biased would have been heightened. In fact, we found little difference in the responses of the two groups. For example, of the 111 items summarized in Table 5, significant[9] response differences occurred on only two; one of the two items concerned Angola, where the conflict was essentially resolved during the two-month period between the two mailings.

---

[6] Early in the project we faced a choice between seeking external funds and making do with the very limited resources provided by the Duke University Research Council and the Institute for Transnational Studies at U.S.C. We selected the latter course because the sudden collapse of the South Vietnamese regime in 1975 lent some urgency to having a baseline for future surveys as near as possible to the end of the American undertaking in Vietnam.

[7] Russett and Hanson (1975:64), using a much shorter questionnaire, received returns from 54 percent of business executives who received questionnaires by mail, and from 69 percent of military officers who had the questionnaire distributed by military authorities at various war colleges. Russett and Hanson cite the 61 percent return rate achieved by Rosenau (1963) as the only leadership study with a higher figure.

[8] The Watergate scandal and revelations that illegal domestic surveillance activities by the FBI and CIA were not limited to the Nixon years have helped to create the atmosphere of distrust that has no doubt affected the return rate in all recent surveys. Several cases of highly unethical surveys indicate that distrust is not wholly unjustified. An especially notorious example occurred when *Financè Magazine* sponsored an alledgedly scholarly survey among international relations specialists, the results of which were then used to promote Richard Nixon for the Nobel Peace Prize. An episode revealing use of blatantly unethical techniques by commercial survey firms received wide publicity. On November 10, 1975, the *New York Times* summarized a longer report by Henry Gemmill, appearing in the *National Observer*, that was also picked up by a number of other major newspaper.

In addition to age and occupational distributions (described below), the respondents can be characterized as: predominantly (90 percent) male,[10] highly educated (over 60 percent have earned graduate degrees), moderately liberal to moderately conservative in ideology (only 15 percent describe themselves as far left, very liberal, very conservative, or far right), and almost equally divided between Democrats (37 percent) and independents (34 percent), with a somewhat smaller representation of Republicans (27 percent).

---

[9] Throughout this study we have adopted a moderately stringent standard for statistical tests. Results are reported as significant only if they exceed the .001 level.

[10] Public opinion polls suggest that sex might be an important intervening variable in the analysis of differences among generations (see, for example, Mueller, 1973:146–47; and Lunch and Sperlich, 1979:34–35). However, other studies seem to indicate that at the leadership level differences between men and women tend to diminish, if not disappear altogether (Rosenau, 1963:151, 181). The present survey includes 2,009 men and 224 women (the other 49 respondents failed to identify their sex). Analysis of the results by sex reveals relatively few differences. For example, of the 111 items summarized in Table 4, significant differences between men and women occurred on only 26. Two-way analyses of variance (sex and generation as the independent variables in the first, and sex and occupation as independent variables in the second) did not materially alter these results. In the first analysis, significant differences attributable to sex occurred in 28 of 111 items, and in the second analysis there were only 25 significant differences between men and women.

Moreover, the results do not support the view that women are consistently more optimistic, dovish, and more concerned with the social-economic-humanitarian aspects of foreign policy than with political/strategic goals. For example, men were more prone than women to view the USSR as expansionist, but these results were reversed when the question concerned China. And on the propositon that "any Communist victory is a defeat for America's national interests," men and women had identical mean scores.

In another analysis we constructed two different indexes for each of three distinct foreign policy belief systems. Contingency coefficients between sex and these indexes were quite consistently on the low side: Cold War Internationalism (.12 and .08), Post-Cold War Internationalism (.08 and .07), and Isolationism (.16 and .17). Only in the latter case does even a moderately pronounced pattern of sex differences emerge, with women the more isolationist.

Finally, we examined generational differences *within* sex groups. For example, do we find that the younger men and older women support a position that is opposed by older men and younger women? The answer is quite consistently negative. In a two-way analysis of variance with sex and generation as independent variables, among those items on which generational differences are significant, only about 5 percent reveal such a pattern. For example, younger men were more skeptical of détente than were the older ones, whereas the reverse tended to be true of women. But such differences were the exception rather than the rule. Of the 111 items discussed here, significant interaction effects occurred on only five, and on only one of these five did the pattern of responses within one sex group reverse that in the other.

These results would seem to indicate that aggregating the data for men and women in the present analysis will not dramatically affect the results.

To assess the effect of age on foreign policy beliefs, we divided the entire sample of 2,282 respondents into four groups based on the year of birth. In the absence of any standard guidelines for identifying generations, the designation of cutting points is a purely arbitrary decision based on two premises. First, we assumed that the three wars in which this nation has been involved since 1941 would provide significant benchmarks for dividing respondents into age groups. Note, moreover, that the "Munich generation versus Vietnam generation" thesis also identifies two of these wars as watershed points in American thinking about external affairs. The second premise is that late adolescence and young adulthood may have special significance for the respondent. Because this period encompasses for many the beginning of eligibility for military service, consciousness of and interest in foreign affairs may be enhanced when the prospect of personal involvement hinges upon the outcome of foreign policy undertakings. More generally, those years in the life cycle have often been identified as especially crucial in the formation and development of political beliefs.[11]

We used three cutting points—1923–24, 1932–33, and 1940–41—to divide the respondents into four groups. Thus, even the youngest of the World War II generation—those born in 1923—had reached at least the age of 18 when the attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into World War II. By the end of that war they would, if otherwise eligible, have been likely to have military service. But even those who were not on active military duty (e.g., most women) could scarcely have lived through the war without having taken cognizance of it. Respondents born between 1924 and 1932 would at least have reached the age of 21 during some part of the Korean War. The older among them would also have been young adults during World War II, but we assumed that for this group the Korean War would have been an especially salient experience. Persons born between 1933 and 1940 would, if inducted into the armed forces, most likely have served during the period following the Korean armistice of 1953 and before the rapid escalation in 1965 of the Vietnam War. Hence this group is labeled the "Interim Generation." Finally, those born after 1940 have been designated as the "Vietnam Generation." Even the oldest persons in this group would have been only 13 years old when the fighting in Korea ended. Thus, we assumed that for them "the war" almost certainly refers to the conflict in Southeast Asia. The "World War II Generation" constitutes the largest part of our sample (39.4 percent of all respondents), followed by the "Vietnam Generation" (25.5 percent), the "Korea Generation" (19.4 percent), and the "Interim Generation" (11.2 percent). The remaining 4.5 percent did not state the year of birth.

---

[11] Neumann (1942:235–36) has defined a political generation as all those who underwent essentially similar historical experiences during the crucial formative years between 17 and 25. The importance of this period in the life cycle is emphasized by many others, for example, Barber (1972).

In order to assess the impact of generation on foreign policy beliefs it would be desirable for each of the age groups to be as similar as possible with respect to other attributes that might serve as competing explanations, for example, occupation. For several reasons this is not the case here. Return rates were not uniform across all groups; they ranged from a low of 39 percent for labor leaders to figures approaching 60 percent for chief editorial writers, military officers, and educators. Some of the directories used to compile the mailing list did not provide birth dates, which prevented us from taking steps at the sampling stage to ensure an even distribution across generations. Moreover, the sociology of occupations is such that prominence or leadership positions tend to come earlier in some professions than in others. For example, business executives typically do not reach the top levels of management before an age (mid to late 50s) at which most senior military officers have already retired. Finally, our access to and a very high return rate from one of the middle level service schools resulted in a high proportion of military officers among the "Vietnam Generation."

As a consequence of such disparities among the four generational groups, simple comparisons across them may be misleading. Multivariate analyses reported in the next section assess the impact of generation in conjunction with occupation. The occupational classification includes 10 categories: Military officers ($N=500$), business executives (294), lawyers (116), clergy (101), Foreign Service officers (125), labor leaders (74), public officials (110), educators (565), leaders in the printed and electronic media (184), and "others" (213).

Findings

The questionnaire has two clusters of items that are especially relevant to the generational explanation of foreign policy cleavages. The first cluster asks respondents to rate the importance of 18 foreign policy goals, ranging from combating world hunger to containing communism. The second cluster, focusing on the "lessons" that should be drawn from the American experience in Vietnam, included 34 items concerning the international system, adversaries, the appropriate international role for the United States, the formulation and instruments of foreign policy, and the proper uses of the past. These 52 items thus encompass many of the key beliefs that allegedly distinguish the older from the younger members of contemporary leadership groups.[12]

Following the reasoning of the "Munich generation versus Vietnam generation" thesis, we have elsewhere spelled out a number of hypotheses linking age to foreign policy beliefs (Holsti and Rosenau, 1976). To summarize briefly, they indicated that, compared to older respondents, the younger leaders would be more inclined to:

Attribute greater importance to economic-humanitarian foreign policy goals, and less to strategic/political ones.
Place emphasis on international cooperation, especially through international organizations.
Perceive a pluralistic international system, rather than a tight bipolar system that is dominated by a zero-sum view of conflict.
Perceive other nations, especially potential adversaries, as nationalistic rather than inherently expansionist.
Prescribe a reduced international role for the United States, especially with respect to military-strategic issues and Third World conflicts.
Support steps to demilitarize, decentralize, and democratize the formulation of American foreign policy.
Question the value and utility of military instruments of foreign policy.

The results summarized in Tables 1 and 2 provide only modest support for the generational hypothesis. When occupation is controlled, the effects of age tend to decline or even to disappear. Or, to restate this in the language of analysis of variance, the results suggest that differences within generations are often more substantial than those between generations. Thus, when leaders in our sample are classified not only by age but also according to occupation, the latter variable consistently accounts for most of the differences among them.

Moreover, although generational effects are in some cases significant, an inspection of the underlying data reveals that the pattern of differences does not always conform to the substance of the "Munich generation versus Vietnam generation" thesis. An analysis confined to items in Tables 1 and 2 that yielded significant differences across age groups uncovers some support for the generational hypothesis, but it is by no means consistent. For example, in 8 of 10 occupational

---

[12] Compare these items, for example, with the "axioms" that Allison (1970–71) or Roskin (1974) cite as the key differences among generations.

Table 1. The Generational Hypothesis on American Foreign Policy: A Test Based on the Responses of 2,282 American Leaders to Proposed Foreign Policy Goals

Here is a list of possible foreign policy goals that the United States might have. Please indicate how much importance you think should be attached to each goal.	*Significant (+), Nonsignificant (0) Differences (.001 level) Between:* [a]	
	Generations	*Occupations*
Maintaining a balance of power among nations	+	+
Defending our allies' security	0	+
Containing communism	+	+
Strengthening countries who are friendly toward us	+	+
Protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression	0	+
Securing adequate supplies of energy	0	+
Protecting the jobs of American workers	0	+
Protecting the interests of American business abroad	0	+
Fostering international cooperation to solve common problems, such as food, inflation and energy	0	+
Combating world hunger	0	+
Helping solve world inflation	+	0
Helping to improve the standard of living in less developed countries	0	+
Strengthening the United Nations	+	+
Keeping peace in the world	0	0
Worldwide arms control	0	+
Promoting and defending our own security	0	+
Helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations	0	+
Promoting the development of capitalism abroad	0	+

[a] Results based on two-way analysis of variance.

groups, the youngest respondents were the least inclined to attribute importance to the containment of communism (exception: public officials, "others"), but in only 4 of 10 occupational groups did those of the Vietnam generation register the lowest rating on the somewhat related goal of maintaining a global balance of power. On the goal of "fostering international cooperation to solve common problems," the youngest respondents provided the highest importance rating in some occupations (clergy, military, media, lawyers), and the lowest in others (Foreign Service officers, business executives, "others").

A similarly mixed pattern emerges from the items on the appropriate "lessons" of Vietnam. On questions concerning the nature of the contemporary international system, respondents of the Vietnam generation were, within their occupations, often among the most inclined to cast doubts on the Cold War premises of a tight bipolar system. However, other questions gave rise to much less clearcut results. An item on the importance of involving the United Nations in the resolution of international disputes found members of the youngest genera-

Table 2. The Generational Hypothesis on American Foreign Policy: A Test Based on the Responses of 2,282 American Leaders to Proposed "Lessons" of Vietnam

This question asks you to indicate your position on certain foreign policy issues. Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.	*Significant (+), Nonsignificant (0) Differences (.001 level) Between:*[a]	
	Generations	*Occupations*
The International System		
A nation will pay a heavy price if it honors its alliance commitments only selectively	+	+
There is considerable validity in the "domino theory" that when one nation falls to communism, others nearby will soon follow a similar path	+	+
Revolutionary forces in "Third World" countries are usually nationalistic rather than controlled by the USSR or China	+	+
Any Communist victory is a defeat for America's national interest	+	+
American foreign policy should be based on the premise that the Communist bloc is irreparably fragmented	+	+
Adversaries		
The Soviet Union is generally expansionist rather than defensive in its foreign policy goals	+	+
Détente permits the USSR to pursue policies that promote rather than restrain conflict	0	+
China is generally expansionist rather defensive in its foreign policy goals	0	+
The Role of the United States		
The best way to encourage democratic development in the "Third World" is for the U.S. to solve its own problems	+	0
Stationing American troops in other countries encourages them to let us do their fighting for those countries	0	+
America's conception of its leadership role in the world must be scaled down	0	+
Military aid programs will eventually draw the United States into unnecessary wars	+	+
It was a serious mistake to agree to locate American technicians in the Sinai	0	+
The U.S. should avoid any involvement in the Angolan civil war	0	+
It is vital to enlist the cooperation of the UN in settling international disputes	+	+
The U.S. should undertake military intervention in the Middle East in case of another oil embargo	0	+
Vital interests of the U.S. are largely confined to western Europe, Japan and the Americas	0	0
Making American Foreign Policy		
Americans have relied too much on presidents to define the national interest	0	+

Table 2. (continued)

	Significant (+), Nonsignificant (0) Differences (.001 level) Between:[a]	
	Generations	*Occupations*
The press is more likely than the government to report the truth about the conduct of foreign policy	+	+
The conduct of American foreign affairs relies excessively on military advice	+	+
Weak allies excessively influence U.S. foreign policy	0	0
An effective foreign policy is impossible when the Executive and Congress are unable to cooperate	+	+
The American people lack the patience for foreign policy undertakings that offer little prospect of success in the short run	0	+
Americans lack an understanding of the role that power plays in world politics	0	+
Limited war cannot be conducted successfully because of constraints imposed by the American political system	+	+
The freedom to dissent at home inhibits the effective conduct of American foreign policy	0	+
The Instruments of Foreign Policy		
If foreign interventions are undertaken, the necessary force should be applied in a short period of time rather than through a policy of graduated escalation	+	+
The U.S. should never try to get by with half measures; we should apply necessary power if we have it	0	+
Rather than simply countering our opponent's thrusts, it is necessary to strike at the heart of the opponent's power	0	+
When force is used, military rather than political goals should determine its application	0	+
The efficiency of military power in foreign affairs is declining	0	0
Limited wars should be fought with air power so as to avoid introducing American ground troops	0	+
The Uses of the Past		
If officials would treat each new crisis on its own merits, rather than relying on past experience, they would usually make better foreign policy decisions	0	+
It is best to forget the foreign policy mistakes of the past as quickly as possible	0	+

[a] Results based on two-way analysis of variance.

tion in strongest agreement within three occupations (labor, educators, clergy), and those of the oldest age groups in greatest agreement in six others (Foreign Service officers, business executives, military officers, public officials, lawyers, and "others"). The proposition that

American influence in the Third World could best be exercised by solving our own problems yielded equally mixed results. Among the media leaders and military officers, the youngest respondents were most fully in agreement, but they were also the most opposed in three other occupations (business, labor, and clergy).

A more detailed examination of eight key propositions that seem most fully to capture the different world views often ascribed to the older and younger generations reveals more clearly the nature of cleavages among our respondents. The first six items in Table 3 depict a bipolar world in which the United States has primary responsibilities for coping with a variety of threats from implacable enemies. The remaining two propositions are usually included high on lists identifying the "lessons of Vietnam" allegedly espoused by the younger generation. When respondents are classified into 40 subgroups (4 generations × 10 occupations), evidence of some generational differences does emerge. For example, subgroups of the World War II generation appear 11 times in the lefthand column (strongest Cold War position), but contrary to the generational hypothesis, they are also found three times in the righthand column: Educators of the oldest age group were among the least supportive of the proposition that the United States should use all means to oppose communism, and they favored a scaled-down international role for this country. Similarly, media leaders of the World War II generation strongly opposed intervention in the Middle East in case of another oil embargo. Subgroups of the Vietnam generation appear 6 times in the lefthand column and 19 in the right.

Compared to this moderate support for the generational hypothesis, a much more consistent pattern emerges from the data on the occupational status of the strongest and weakest supporters of the Cold War positions. Military officers and business executives, and not only those of the older generation, provide the strongest support for the Cold War positions—together they account for 34 of the 42 entries in the lefthand column of Table 3—whereas media leaders and educators are almost equally pronounced in their skepticism, accounting for 26 of the 40 subgroups in the righthand column. Stated somewhat differently, cases in which cross-pressures may be assumed to be at work—for example, media leaders or educators of the World War II generation, or military officers and business executives of the Vietnam generation—occupation clearly tends to override age.

It is appropriate to inquire, however, whether the results for these items are representative of the main tendencies within the much larger set of items in the study. Table 4 summarizes the findings for 111 items (including those already described in Tables 1–3) concerning:

Table 3. Strongest and Weakest Support for Selected Foreign Policy Propositions Among 2,282 Respondents Classified into 40 Subgroups (4 Generations × 10 Occupations)

	Subgroups with Strongest Cold War Positions			*Subgroups with Weakest Cold War Positions*		
	Occupation	*Generation*	*Mean Score*	*Occupation*	*Generation*	*Mean[a] Score*
There is considerable validity in the "domino theory" that when one nation falls to communism, others nearby will follow a similar path	Military	W. W. II	0.73	Media	Vietnam	−0.22
	Military	Korea	0.67	Media	Korea	−0.18
	Military	Interim	0.59	Foreign Svc.	Vietnam	−0.17
	Military	Vietnam	0.55	Clergy	Vietnam	−0.15
	Business	W. W. II	0.50	Media	Interim	−0.14
	Business	Interim	0.50			
Any Communist victory is a defeat for America's national interest	Military	W. W. II	0.38	Media	Vietnam	−0.59
	Military	Korea	0.32	Media	Interim	−0.50
	Military	Interim	0.29	Media	Korea	−0.50
	Clergy	W. W. II	0.21	Educators	Vietnam	−0.50
	Business	Interim	0.12	Educators	Korea	−0.47
The Soviet Union is generally expansionist rather than defensive in its foreign policy goals	Military	Korea	0.78	Educators	Vietnam	0.18
	Military	Interim	0.78	Clergy	Vietnam	0.22
	Business	Interim	0.74	Labor	Interim	0.22
	Clergy	W. W. II	0.74	Clergy	Interim	0.23
	Military	Vietnam	0.71	Media	Vietnam	0.32
Détente permits the USSR to pursue policies that promote rather than restrain conflict	Military	W. W. II	0.61	Public off.	Interim	−0.27
	Military	Interim	0.52	Foreign Svc.	Vietnam	−0.20
	Military	Vietnam	0.43	Clergy	Vietnam	−0.18
	Clergy	W. W. II	0.40	Lawyers	Interim	−0.17
	Military	Korea	0.31	Educators	Vietnam	−0.16
The U.S. should take all steps including the use of force to prevent the spread of communism	Military	Interim	0.29	Media	Korea	−0.74
	Military	W. W. II	0.23	Media	Vietnam	−0.65
	Military	Korea	0.14	Educators	Vietnam	−0.65
	Military	Vietnam	0.05	Educators	W. W. II	−0.54
	Clergy	Interim	−0.14	Foreign Svc.	Vietnam	−0.54
The U.S. should undertake military intervention in the Middle East in case of another oil embargo	Business	Vietnam	−0.13	Media	Korea	−0.87
	Business	Interim	−0.15	Foreign Svc.	Interim	−0.74
	Clergy	Interim	−0.18	Media	Vietnam	−0.70
	Military	Interim	−0.19	Media	W. W. II	−0.70
	Military	Korea	−0.28	Media	Interim	−0.67

Table 3. (continued)

	Subgroups with Strongest Cold War Positions			*Subgroups with Weakest Cold War Postions*		
	Occupation	*Generation*	*Mean[a] Score*	*Occupation*	*Generation*	*Mean[a] Score*
Revolutionary forces in Third World countries are usually nationalistic rather than controlled by the USSR or China	Military	W. W. II	−0.25	Public off.	Interim	0.60
	Clergy	W. W. II	−0.09	Educators	Vietnam	0.56
	Business	Korea	−0.08	Foreign Svc.	Vietnam	0.50
	Military	Interim	−0.04	Educators	Interim	0.50
	Clergy	Korea	−0.04	Media	Korea	0.48
America's conception of its leadership role in the world must be scaled down	Military	Vietnam	−0.30	Labor	Korea	0.43
	Military	Korea	−0.28	Educators	Korea	0.29
	Military	W. W. II	−0.27	Media	Vietnam	0.27
	Military	Interim	−0.21	Educators	Vietnam	0.26
	Business	Interim	−0.15	Educators	W. W. II	0.25
	Labor	Interim	−0.15			
Summary: Number of Appearances in Each Column						
Occupations	Military		26	Military		0
	Business		8	Business		0
	Clergy		7	Clergy		4
	Labor		1	Labor		2
	Lawyers		0	Lawyers		1
	Public off.		0	Public off.		2
	Foreign Svc.		0	Foreign Svc.		5
	Educators		0	Educators		11
	Media		0	Media		15
Generations	W. W. II		11	W. W. II		3
	Korea		9	Korea		8
	Interim		16	Interim		10
	Vietnam		6	Vietnam		19

[a] Mean scores recorded on a scale of 1.00 (strongly agree) to −1.00 (strongly disagree).

the sources of failure in Vietnam (21 items), consequences of the war in Southeast Asia (13), the "lessons" of Vietnam (34), goals of American foreign policy (18), the appropriate international role for the United States (7), and appraisals of current foreign policy performance (18). The results are very much in line with those reported above. Two-way analyses of variance with generation and occupation as explanatory variables reveal significant effects of the latter for 100

Table 4. The Generational Hypothesis on American Foreign Policy: A Comparison Based on the Responses of 2,282 American Leaders, Classified According to Age and Occupation

		Number of Items with Significant Differences (.001 level) Between:[a]	
	Total No. of Items	*Generations*	*Occupations*
Goals of American Foreign Policy (Table 1)	18	5	16
"Lessons" of Vietnam (Table 2)			
The international system	5	5	5
U.S. adversaries	3	1	3
Role of the United States	9	3	7
Making American foreign policy	9	4	8
Instruments of foreign policy	6	1	5
Uses of the past in foreign policy making	2	0	2
Sources of failure in Vietnam			
Actions of others	3	3	3
Vietnam was an unsound undertaking	2	0	2
Military factors	4	3	4
Domestic constraints on U.S. policy	5	2	5
Lack of knowledge and understanding	3	0	3
Others	4	2	3
Consequences of Vietnam War			
Impact on the international system	3	1	3
U.S. adversaries encouraged	2	2	2
Constraints on future U.S. policy	2	0	1
Types of future U.S. undertakings	3	3	3
Damage to American society	3	0	2
The U.S. international role	7	1	7
Rating U.S. foreign policy performance	18	5	16
Totals	111	41	100

[a] Results based on two-way analysis of variance. Interaction effects between generation and occupation significant for none of the 111 items.

of the 111 questionnaire items, compared to only 41 of 111 for the former. It should be reiterated, moreover, that even when generational differences yielded statistically significant results, the underlying scores did not uniformly fit the pattern of a "hawkish-internationalist" older group versus a "dovish-neoisolationist" younger cohort.

Finally, for each of the 34 items concerning the "lessons" of Vietnam we also asked the leaders in our sample to indicate "the extent to which your position was influenced by the Vietnam conflict." The generational hypothesis would seem to imply that the younger age cohort should have been more significantly affected by Vietnam, whereas those of the older generation, whose experiences included additional dramatic or traumatic foreign policy episodes, should have been less affected. The data for these 34 items provide only moderate support for this line of reasoning. Significant generational differences appeared for only 12 "lessons," compared to 21 for the occupation variable. And, once again, the underlying scores indicate that the direction of differences is only moderately consistent with the generational hypothesis. For example, among educators and business executives there was a rather marked tendency for members of the Vietnam generation to indicate that the war had influenced their positions, but this was much less often the case for labor leaders and Foreign Service officers.

Conclusion

These findings provide a relatively narrow base from which to draw broad conclusions about political generations. While they ought not to be construed as undermining the recent interest in generational explanations of political conflict and change, the results do raise some questions about a narrower but nevertheless important point—the oft-repeated assertion that the cleavages created by the Vietnam conflict are essentially generational in nature. That argument received only modest support from our data. In contrast to classifying the respondents by occupation, dividing them into four age groups did not consistently bring forth striking differences. Multivariate analyses indicated that, with few exceptions, generation proved to be a much less potent explanation than occupation. Moreover, even when differences among generations survived various statistical tests, the pattern of differences did not always conform to the substance of the argument put forward in some recent discussions of generational cleavages in this country.

In searching for ways to explain these results, one line of inquiry might be to look for potential methodological problems. Perhaps the rules used to define generations and the rationale for their choice were inadequate. This may be true and there has been no effort to justify the selected cutting points as the last word on the matter. However, analyses that divided the data in some alternative ways did not give rise to greatly different findings that would sustain more strongly the generational hypothesis.[13]

Second, the results may reflect the fact that the sample did not adequately represent the very youngest members of the "Vietnam generation"—those who were of college age during the conflict. Of the 583 in that age group, only 262 were born in 1946 and later.[14] There is no way of determining the extent to which these results would have been altered by inclusion of more respondents under the age of 30—or perhaps even under the age of 25—at the time that the questionnaire was filled out. In any case, whatever the desirability of having a different age structure for our sample, there were some practical barriers to doing so. The key problem is that persons in leadership positions are rarely very young, and it is not always possible for the outside investigator to identify even a pool of younger persons from which future leaders are likely to be selected. The military stand out as one exception because the system of service schools allows one to sample officers who have been identified as "comers." But many occupations lack a similarly visible system that can be used by outsiders for research purposes. Indeed, for some occupations it was extremely difficult to find useful and current lists of persons holding any leadership positions, much less leaders of a specific age group. This was the case, for example, with labor leaders.

---

[13] For example, dividing the respondents by decade of birth did not yield striking generational differences beyond those reported here. Further evidence on this point is available from one of the authors (ORH).

If we assume that these results are not merely a reflection of problems in cutting points between generations and sampling, we are led to a still different explanation—the concept of generation itself. Categories based on date of birth incorporate some simplifying assumptions that are at least open to debate. The premise that there is a single stage in the life cycle at which all persons become politically conscious—and therefore become receptive to the "lessons" driven home by contemporary events—may be generally valid. But the assumption that even dramatic events will be interpreted in the same way by all members of an age group, with the consequence that the same lessons will be adduced, seems implausible. Moreover, generational identification, by itself, carries a relatively modest load of additional information that might be used to predict one's political beliefs. The task is easier if the generations in question are widely separated. For example, it would be easy to predict that persons born in 1390 would believe that a flat world was at the center of the universe, whereas those born in 1930 would not. Predicting other information on the basis of age alone is much more difficult when virtually all respondents were born within the first half of this century.

When compared to occupation the limitations of generation as an explanatory variable become clearer. Unlike age alone, occupation also provides a number of clues about other experiences that may affect political beliefs. For example, if we know that a person is a lawyer, military officer, Foreign Service officer, physician, or labor leader, we can also make some better-than-random guesses about some other types of socializing influences—education, memberships, professional norms, and the like.

---

[14] A separate analysis of these 262 respondents would have been significantly affected by the high proportion of military officers among them.

If these results reflect accurately the state of contemporary leadership beliefs, they provide some insight into the prospects for early achievement of consensus on issues of international politics and American foreign policy. One need hardly undertake an extensive survey to recognize that, whatever consensus may have existed during the two decades after World War II, it has been shattered, or to judge as less than totally successful efforts of the last three administrations to reconstruct a new consensus around such concepts as détente or global human rights.

The generational hypothesis leads to some optimism on this score.[15] It presumes that replacement of one leadership group with those of the next generation will result in a new consensus that reflects the shared experiences—and therefore the common dispositions and world views—of the ascending leadership group, in this case, the Vietnam generation. Time, in short, will be the great healer and unifier.

However, the findings do not warrant such optimism. They suggest a rather different scenario, featuring continuing cleavages among American leadership groups arising, in turn, from substantial differences on many critical foreign policy issues *within* generations. In other words, the data suggest that, barring a unifying event of dramatic proportions—for example, another Pearl Harbor—the current ferment and lack of consensus in this country may persist well beyond the passing from the scene of those who lived through World War II. Impressionistic evidence suggests that even the brutal invasion of Afghanistan has not created such a consensus.

---

[15] This is not to say that proponents of the generational hypothesis necessarily applaud the prospective succession of "Vietnam generation" to positions of leadership in the United States. Russett (1975:19–21) concludes that the putative neo-isolationism of this age cohort will serve poorly at a time when the agenda of international social-economic-environmental problems will require greater rather than less recognition of interdependence. A more general fear is well summarized in Roskin's observation that leaders of each generation, "formed by the dramatic experiences of their young adulthood . . . come to power and eventually misapply the lessons of their youth" (Roskin, 1974:365).

References

Allison, Graham T.
1970– "Cool it: the foreign policy of young America," Foreign Policy
1971 1:144–60.
Barber, James David
1972 The Presidential Character. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
Barton, Allen H.
1974– "Consensus and conflict among American leaders," Public Opinion
1975 Quarterly 38:507–30.
Bobrow, Davis, and Neal E. Cutler
1967 "Time-oriented explanations of national security beliefs: cohort, life state, and situation," Peace Research Society (International) Papers 8:31–37.
Converse, Philip, and Howard Schuman
1970 "Silent majorities and the Vietnam War," Scientific American 222:17–25.
Cutler, Neal E.
1970 "Generational succession and a source of foreign policy attitudes," Journal of Peace Research 1:33–47.
Drew, Elizabeth
1978 "A Reporter at Large (Zbigniew Brzezinski)," New Yorker, May 1:116–17.
Erskine, Hazel
1970 "The polls: is war a mistake?" Public Opinion Quarterly 34:134–50.
Handberg, Roger B., Jr.
1972– "The 'Vietnam analogy': student attitudes on war," Public Opinion
1973 Quarterly 36:612–15.
Holsti, Ole R., and James N. Rosenau
1979a "America's foreign policy agenda: the post-Vietnam beliefs of American leaders." Pp. 231–68 in Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and Patrick J. McGowan (eds.), Challenges to America: United States Foreign Policy in the 1980s. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage.
1979b "Vietnam, consensus, and the belief systems of American leaders," World Politics 32:1–56.
1976 "The 'lessons' of Vietnam: a study of American leadership." Paper prepared for the 17th Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association.
Hovey, Graham
1978 "Architects of U.S. African policy privately worried by Carter's attacks on Moscow," New York Times, June 14:A3.
Huntington, Samuel P.
1974 "Paradigms of American politics: beyond the one, the two and the many," Political Science Quarterly 89:1–26.
Jervis, Robert
1976 Perception and Misperception in International Politics. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
Lipset, Seymour Martin, and Everett Carll Ladd, Jr.
1971 "College generations: from the 1930s to the 1960s," Public Interest 25:99–113.

Lunch, William, and Peter W. Sperlich
1979 "American public opinion and the war in Vietnam," Western Political Quarterly 32:21–44.
Mandelbaum, Michael, and William Schneider
1979 "The new internationalisms: public opinion and American foreign policy," in Kenneth Oye, Donald Rothchild, and Robert Lieber (eds.), Eagle Entangled: U.S. Foreign Policy in a Complex World. New York: Longman.
Mannheim, Karl
1952 Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge. Paul Kecskmeti (ed.). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
May, Ernest R.
1973 Lessons of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy. New York: Oxford University Press.
Mueller, John
1973 War, Presidents and Public Opinion. New York: Wiley.
Neumann, Sigmund
1942 Permanent Revolution: The Total State in a World at War. New York: Harper and Brothers.
Rielly, John A. (ed.)
1975 American Public Opinion and Foreign Policy 1975. Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.
Rintala, Marvin
1962 Three Generations: The Extreme Right in Finnish Politics. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Publications.
Rosenau, James N.
1963 National Leadership and Foreign Policy. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
Roskin, Michael
1974 "From Pearl Harbor to Vietnam: shifting generational paradigms and foreign policy," Political Science Quarterly 89:563–88.
Russett, Bruce M.
1975 "The Americans' retreat from world power," Political Science Quarterly 90:1–21
Russett, Bruce M., and Elizabeth Hanson
1975 Interest and Ideology. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman.
Spitzer, Alan B.
1973 "The historical problem of generations," American Historical Review 78:1353–85.
Sussman, Barry
1976 Elites in America. Washington: The Washington Post Publishing Co.
Taylor, Stan A., and Robert S. Wood
1966 "Images and generation: a social-psychological analysis of the Sino-Soviet dispute," Brigham Young University Studies, 7:143–57.

Changes in Family Life in Middletown, 1924–77

HOWARD M. BAHR

THIS PAPER compares selected characteristics of family life as described by high school students in 1924 and in 1977. It is a replication of portions of the research conducted in the midwestern city of Middletown by Robert and Helen Lynd and described in their widely acclaimed community studies, *Middletown* (1929) and *Middletown in Transition* (1937). It is based on data collected as part of restudy of Middletown currently underway.[1]

The Lynds' Views About Modernization and Family Life

Much of *Middletown* was about how the city had changed since 1890, and there were numerous comments on the apparent direction of existing trends. In a chapter entitled "Child-rearing" it was argued

---

[1] An earlier report, on changes in student attitudes, appeared in Caplow and Bahr (1979). Additional details about research methods and sampling are available there.

Abstract Characteristics of family life described by Middletown high school students in 1924 and reported in Robert and Helen Lynd's *Middletown* are contrasted with data from students interviewed in 1977. Comparisons of students' responses suggest that there has been an attenuation of certain family functions and an enhancement of others. The 1977 students were more likely to earn their own spending money and less likely to receive their sex education from their parents; and females were more likely to spend evenings away from home. There were changes in definitions of women's roles, and the range of desirable parental characteristics had narrowed to focus on direct parent-child relationships of an emotional or expressive nature. Analysis of reported topics of disagreement suggest that the generation gap in 1977 is no wider than it was in 1924.

Howard M. Bahr is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Family and Demographic Research Institute, Brigham Young University. This paper is a report of the Middletown III Project, conducted by the Center for Program Effectiveness Studies at the University of Virginia and supported by the National Science Foundation, Grant No. SOC 75-13580. The investigators are Theodore Caplow, Howard M. Bahr, and Bruce A. Chadwick. The data collection in Middletown high schools was supervised by Alice Lynn Ryssman.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University
Published by Elsevier North Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/80/0044-035/$1.75

that the role of the home in the socialization of the young was declining: "Even from the earliest years of the child's life the former dominance of the home is challenged" (1929:133). This decline in the home's influence was seen in the smaller size of contemporary yards, the advent of community playgrounds which provided an alternative to home play, the passing of the parental role in occupational training, and, in response to growing numbers of working mothers among the working class, the assumption by institutions of the community of many former parental functions. The attrition of family functions was especially noticeable in the lives of teenage children, the Lynds said, for "the agencies drawing the child away from the home multiply," and there was an increasing problem of generational conflict over "early sophistication" and the precocious independence of the young. They described the strains upon the family with findings about, among other things, the sources of young people's spending money, the number of evenings per week they spent at home, and causes of family disagreement.

The Lynds' perspectives on the influence of secularization (or modernization) upon the family parallel Ogburn's (1933) later description of the loss of family functions. Since Ogburn's time, the accepted theoretical stance has changed from an emphasis upon loss to a concern with relative predominance or specialization of family function. Adams refers to the ongoing process as the "expansion and spatial separation" from the nuclear family of functions formerly concentrated there (Adams, 1975:77, 94–45). It is recognized that the family has either lost or experienced an attenuation of many of the functions formerly located within it. At the same time, at least one function—that of meeting emotional needs—seems to have become more salient to the nuclear family: "The family has become a specialist in gratifying people's psychological needs—needs for understanding, affection, and happiness" (Adams, 1975:95).

The idea that along with an increased rate of social change came a growing gap between parents and youth was a foreshadowing of the modern notion of the generation gap. However, the Lynds (1929:146) recognized that the trends were not all unidirectional: "Despite the difficulty of holding children to established sanctions and the shifting of the sanctions themselves, not all of the currents in the community are set in the direction of widening the gap between parents and children."

Nevertheless, a decade later (1937:168) they reaffirmed their view that the general trend was toward increased generational cleavage:

> Adult-imposed restraints of obedience to parents, school, and public opinion have weakened further as the adult world has crumbled under the depres-

sion. A leading local minister says the disillusionment apparent today among many of the young with the adult world and its values "began early in the depression." "These kids in high school and out at the college know what's going on," remarked a businessman. "They see a lot of the inadequacies in the present setup, and many of them want to buck over the traces."

Although no new survey data had been collected from Middletown's young people as part of the work for *Middletown in Transition*, the Lynds argued (1937:168) that the gap in attitudes between the parents and their children had widened: "The gap between the purposes and mutual understanding of parents and children noted in 1925 has apparently widened still further. One got the impression in 1935 of a more self-conscious subculture of the young in Middletown." We do not have longitudinal data to trace the perceptions of generational cleavage in the decades between 1924 and the present, but our 1977 high school survey makes possible a 50-year comparison.

The 1924 Survey

The Lynds completed two questionnaire surveys of high school students in Middletown. One instrument, a questionnaire on "the life of the high school population" was administered in all high school sophomore, junior, and senior English classes. The Lynds reported (1929:509) that the "between 700 and 800 boys and girls" who participated represented about three-fourths of the student population (they were not more specific than that about total completion rates, although for specific items exact *N*'s are given). The second questionnaire used by the Lynds, consisting primarily of true-false attitude items, was administered to juniors and seniors in social science classes. Because the items relevant to family characteristics all appeared in the lengthier "high school life" questionnaire, the comparisons treated in the present paper all use data from that survey. Changes in student attitudes as found in comparisons between the Lynds' true-false questionnaires and our 1977 survey have been reported in a previous paper (Caplow and Bahr, 1979).

The Lynds' high school life questionnaire contained questions on a variety of subjects, including occupational and educational aspirations, high school activities, leisure pursuits, church participation, extracurricular reading, employment, personal expenses, and several items about home life and perceptions of parents. Specific items on which statistical breakdowns were published, thereby making possible comparisons between the Lynds' findings and our own,[2] include the following: sources of parent-child disagreement; evening time spent at home; perceptions of the qualities most desirable in parents; sources of spending money; and sources of information about "sex matters."

---

[2] The original questionnaires seem to have been destroyed. In the Lynd papers at the Library of Congress there is a note in Robert Lynd's handwriting instructing that they

The Replication

The 1977 questionnaire, titled "School Experience, Occupational Plans, Family Background, and Attitudes of Middletown High School Youths," was eight pages long, and included large portions of both Lynd questionnaires and some additional items about school life, occupational aspirations, and family background. It was designed to fit into a 50-minute class period, but in at least one high school, the allowed time was less and some students had difficulty completing the form.

The survey of high school students was conducted in all four of Middletown's high schools during the winter of 1977, preceded by negotiations with school officials and a formal letter to parents informing them of the project and its purposes. The questionnaire was administered by teachers in each school, who received written instructions. It was offered at a given hour to all students then in school; 3,257 completed instruments were obtained from an estimated total population of 4,000. Students in special education classes were excluded by a decision of school officials.

The present analysis is based on a 50 percent random sample of the questionnaires (1,673 cases). Ninth-grade students, present in our sample but not in the Lynds', were eliminated from the tabulations for this paper, as were black students, who were included in their sample but not in their tabulation. After deleting these "ineligible" cases, the maximum number of cases available for the present analysis was 999.

Findings

The discussion of differences between student responses in 1924 and 1977 is organized around the two propositions about modernization and family change derived from the Lynds' analysis, namely: (1) that the trend of attrition and attenuation of family functions has continued, and (2) that the forces producing intergenerational cleav-

---

be disposed of, and only sample copies survive. Accordingly, comparisons are not possible for items which do not receive detailed treatment in the Lynds' published work. Examples of items in their questionnaire for which statistical distributions are not available in the *Middletown* volumes are number of hours spent having a good time in the company of parents, number of meals eaten at home, and the query: "List what you did between breakfast and bed-time the last 2 Sundays."

age continue to operate. In other words, we expected to find that the family is less central in the lives of Middletown youth of 1977 than it was in 1924, and that parent-youth disagreement continues at least on a comparable level. The findings are summarized under three general headings: family influences on student time and money, family and sex education, and student perceptions of parents.

FAMILY INFLUENCES ON STUDENT TIME AND MONEY

Evenings spent at home. Unlike the other items to be considered, the question on evening time spent at home was a simple count and did not include detail on the nature or location of the evening activities which drew young people away from the home.

The modernization/family attenuation proposition yields the prediction that the 1977 respondents were away from home significantly more than were their 1924 counterparts. As may be seen in Table 1, for the male students the 1924–77 differences are not significant: boys in 1977 were no more apt to spend their evenings away from home than were boys in 1924. For the female students, however, the difference is in the predicted direction, with the 1977 high school girls almost twice as apt to be gone from home at least five nights a week (26 percent of the 1924 girls reported only 0–2 evenings at home in the week preceding the survey, compared to 46 percent of the 1977 girls) and the number of girls home at least five nights a week significantly higher in 1924 (38 percent, compared to 25 percent in 1977). These

Table 1. Student Reports[a] of Evenings Spent at Home During the Past Week, by Sex, 1924 and 1977

Number of Evenings at Home in Past Week	*Males*		*Females*	
	1924[b]	*1977*	*1924*[b]	*1977*
0	19%	24%	5% *	18%
1	11	11	9	12
2	12	12	12	16
3	13	15	18	14
4	15	12	18	15
5	14	12	19	10
6	9	4	11	6
7	7	10	8	9
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of cases (*N*)	(396)	(422)	(458)	(485)

[a] In both surveys the question was worded, "How many evenings in the past seven have you been home all evening from supper to bedtime?"

[b] Lynd and Lynd, 1929:135.

* Percentage differences between adjoining columns statistically significant at the .01 level.

results suggest that by 1924 the male students had reached a level of independence from home approximately equal to that of the 1977 students. If some family functions were less centered in the nuclear family in 1977 than in 1924, they seem to have affected the male students' physical presence at home very little. In contrast, whatever factors have operated to draw students away from the home in the evenings have had an increasing effect on female students, such that they are much less likely to spend evenings at home than they were in 1924.

What has happened, as becomes clear when the differences in the distribution of evenings at home for boys and girls in 1924 is compared with the sex differences in 1977, is that in 1924 there was a significant difference between the sexes, with boys more likely to spend evenings away from home. By 1977, this difference had disappeared. In 1924 males were almost four times as likely to be away from home every evening of the week as were female students (19 percent, compared to 5 percent); by 1977 the males still had a slight edge in proportion away from home every night (24 percent versus 18 percent for the girls) but the females were more likely than the males to be away from home five or six nights a week (28 percent versus 23 percent for the males) and the proportions of students home most of the time (5 to 7 nights a week) was the same for both sexes (26 percent for males and 25 percent for females).

Apparently the forces pulling young people out of the home have operated differentially upon the sexes: initially their influence was greatest upon the males, but by 1977 girl students had "caught up" and were about as likely as their male peers to spend evening time away from home.

Sources of spending money. It was anticipated from the modernization/family attenuation proposition that students in 1977 would be less dependent upon their families for spending money than students were in 1924. The findings did not support this position. Comparisons of the percentage distributions in Table 2 reveal that males in 1977 were significantly *more* likely to report income from family (either from fixed allowances or asking parents), with 18 percent reporting such familial sources in 1924, compared to 32 percent in 1977. A slightly higher percentage of males in 1977 said they received money from jobs, while in 1924 a much higher proportion of males reported income from several sources, including money from family. The findings are somewhat ambiguous—male students in 1977 were more likely to earn money, and also more likely to receive allowances—but the findings do not support the view that 1977 males were less dependent upon their families for spending money than the

Table 2. Student Reports[a] of Sources of Spending Money, 1924 and 1977

	Males			*Females*		
	1924		*1977*	*1924*		*1977*
Fixed allowance	3%	*	14%	11%		12%
Asking your parents for money as you need it, or gifts from other sources	15		18	53	*	20
Earning money	37	*	45	9	*	40
No main source, or combination of the above	45	*	22	27		28
Number of cases (*N*)	(386)		(479)	(454)		(516)

[a] In the 1924 survey the item read, "Check the one or ones of the following ways in which you get your spending money," followed by four categories: "fixed allowance," "asking your parents for money as you need it," "earning money," and "gifts from other sources than parents." However, the Lynds' (1929:142) published distribution of responses combined "asking your parents . . ." and "gifts from other sources" in a single category. In the 1977 survey the item was worded, "How do you get most of your spending money? (Please circle the *main* source of most of your spending money") followed by these categories: "fixed allowance," "asking my parents for money as I need it," "earning money (job)," "gifts from other sources than parents," and "no main source, or combination of the above."

* Percentage differences between adjoining columns statistically significant at the .01 level.

1924 males. The 1924–77 comparisons for female students reveal that the 1977 females were much less likely to receive money from their families, and more than four times as likely to be earning their own spending money. Thus, as with the question about evenings at home, the comparisons reveal a situation where male students in 1977 are comparable to the male students in 1924, but the two sets of female students differ markedly, with the difference in the predicted direction.

A comparison of sex differences in 1924 and 1977 reveals changes similar to those affecting evenings at home. In 1924 the females were strikingly different from the males in being much more likely to receive their spending money from parents in the form of fixed allowances or on a demand basis, a situation that the Lynds characterized (1929:142) as follows: "While over three-fourths of these Middletown boys are thus learning habits of independence as regards money matters by earning and managing at least part of their money, over half of the girls are busily acquiring the habits of money dependence that characterize Middletown wives by being entirely dependent upon their parents for their spending money without even a regular allowance." By 1977 that differential so deplored by the Lynds had disappeared. As may be seen by comparing columns 2 and 4 of Table 2, in 1977 there was no difference in sources of spending money between high school boys and girls in Middletown.

FAMILY AND SEX EDUCATION

The percentages in Table 3 support the notion that the role of the family in the transmission of sexual knowledge to young people has declined over the past 50 years. In 1924, one-third of the males and two-thirds of the females said their major source of sex information was parents. By 1977, each of these percentages had declined by about half so that only one-fifth of the males and about one-third of

Table 3. Student Reports[a] of Sources of Sex Information, by Sex, 1924 and 1977

	Males			*Females*		
Sources of Knowledge on Sex	*1924*		*1977*	*1924*		*1977*
Mother or father	32%	*	18%	68%	*	35%
Friends	42		38	22	*	35
Schoolteachers	4		5	4		9
Books or films[b]	—		14	—		9
Television[b]	—		1	—		0
Church teachers or ministers	1		0	2		0
YMCA or YWCA	11	*	0	1		0
Other	10[c]	*	24	3[c]	*	13
Own experience, myself, on my own			10			3
Brothers or sisters			1			2
From the streets			2			0
Combination of above categories			8			7
Other			3			1
Total	100%		100%	100%		101%
Number of cases (*N*)	(264)		(484)	(344)		(514)

[a] In the Lynds' questionnaire the item was worded, "Check the one of the following sources from which you have received most of whatever knowledge you have on sex matters" followed by the response categories "From boy or girl friends," "from school teachers," "from mother or father," "from Sunday School teachers," "from Y.M.C.A. or Y.W.C.A.," and "from other sources (state what)." However, in writing about the item in *Middletown* the Lynds stated it differently: "From what source did you receive most of whatever information you have on sex matters?" (Lynd and Lynd, 1929:146). In the 1977 replication the wording paralleled that on the 1924 questionnaire rather than the version in the book. It read: "Which *one* of the following sources has provided you with most of whatever knowledge you have on sex matters?" followed by these categories: mother or father, school teachers, church teachers or ministers, friends, books or films, television, YMCA or YWCA, and other (please explain)."

[b] Not given as a possible response in 1924. However, the Lynds (1929:146) noted: "Movies and the so-called 'sex magazines' were not mentioned specifically by any of the children, but according to many parents . . . these play an important part." This comment prompted us to include these two categories as specific options in the 1977 instrument.

[c] Not given by the Lynds (1929:146); we arrived at these figures by subtracting the sum of the percentages they listed for specific categories from 100 percent. Their only comment about the composition of students in this residual category was: "Other answers were scattered."

* Percentage differences between adjoining columns statistically significant at the .01 level.

the females identified parents as the primary source of sex knowledge.

Friends were the most important source of sex knowledge for male students in 1924, and remained so in 1977. The importance of YMCA workers as a source of sex education had dwindled from 11 percent in 1924 to nothing in 1977, and books or films had replaced them as third most frequent source. The greatest change occurs among the female students, for whom parents were the main source of sex information in 1924. By 1977 friends had become as important a source as parents (both 35 percent), followed by schoolteachers and books or films (both 9 percent).

The figures in Table 3 also accord with the previously noted pattern of increasing similarity between female students and their male counterparts. By 1977 the proportion of females identifying friends as the primary source of sex knowledge was almost the same as for males, and in the other categories their distribution was much closer to that for males than it was in 1924.

One of the striking changes is the relative importance of the "other" category in 1977, and so a breakdown of the major types of responses making up this category was included in the table. Most of the males represented in this category listed a variation of "myself" or "my own experience," or else stated two or more sources; most females categorized here also listed two or more sources, apparently finding it difficult to distinguish a single major source of knowledge about sex. The analysis of the nature of the "other" responses produced no evidence that we were overlooking a substantial parental influence imbedded in the multiple responses listed there. On the contrary, the detailed analysis of this residual category reaffirmed the finding that in 1977 parents were fairly unimportant sources of sex information for males, and no more important than friends as sources of sex knowledge for female students.

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS

Sources of disagreement with parents. The Lynds used a list of 13 possible topics to assess the nature of students' disagreements with their parents. The students were encouraged to mark as many of the items on the list as fit their situation. There was no attempt to measure intensity of conflict, only the topics of disagreement. However, comparisons of the incidence of disagreements of a given type may provide some clues about changes in the extent of parent-student conflict over the 53-year period. The relevant percentage distributions are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Student Reports[a] of Sources of Disagreement with Their Parents, by Sex, 1924 and 1977

	Males			*Females*		
	1924		*1977*	*1924*		*1977*
The hours [1924: hour] you get in at night	45%		46%	43%		42%
The number of times you go out on school nights during the week	45	**	31	48	**	35
Your grades at school [1924: Grades at school]	40		34	31		28
Your spending money	37		38	29		29
Use of the automobile	36	*	29	30	*	22
The people [1924: boys or girls] you choose as friends	25	*	33	27	*	36
Home duties (yardwork, cooking, helping around the house, etc.) [1924: . . . (tending furnace, cooking etc.)]	19	**	45	26	**	46
Church and attendance at religious services [1924: . . . and Sunday School attendance]	19	*	11	19		13
The way you dress (including hair style, general grooming) [1924: The way you dress]	16	**	25	25		19
Going to unchaperoned parties	15	**	27	28		29
Sunday (or Sabbath) observance, aside from attendance at services [1924: Sunday observance, aside from just going to Church and Sunday School]	14	*	6	14	**	3
Clubs or societies you belong to	6		6	10		5
Other causes of disagreement (please explain) [1924: State any other causes of disagreement]	10		16	8	**	28
Number of cases (*N*)	(348)		(442)	(382)		(488)

[a] The items in the two surveys were practically identical. The 1924 item was (Lynd and Lynd, 1929:522): "Check the things listed below about which you and your parents disagree." [Items listed in table followed, and then this probe:] "State any other causes of disagreement." The same item in the 1977 questionnaire read: "Circle below the things about which you and your parents disagree. You may circle more than one; circle as many as you feel you have disagreements about." The wording of the categories in the above table corresponds to the 1977 version, with differences between it and the 1924 version noted parenthetically.

* Differences are statistically significant at the .05 level.

** Differences are statistically significant at the .01 level.

In 1924 the most frequent sources of disagreement with parents, reported by over 40 percent of both male and female students, were the hours they got in at night and the number of times during the week they went out. In 1977 the hour the student came home nights was also the most important source of disagreement for males (and the second most important for females), and the proportion of students reporting disagreements with parents on this topic was about the same as 50 years earlier. Less important in 1977 as a precipitant of disagreements was the number of times during the week the student wanted to go out (mentioned by almost half of the students in 1924 but only about one-third in 1977). Also slightly less important in 1977 as sources of disagreement were the use of the automobile, persons chosen as friends, church attendance, and Sunday (or Sabbath) observance.

For males there were three topics which were much more a source of disagreement for the 1977 students than for the students in their grandfather's generation: conflict over home duties, conflict over dress and grooming, and conflict over attending unchaperoned parties. Friendship choices and home duties were also more frequently mentioned as sources of disagreement by female students in 1977. On balance, the percentages in Table 4 do not suggest that the incidence of parent-youth conflict in Middletown families was greater in 1977 than in 1924. In fact, in both periods those topics about which the highest levels of disagreement occurred generated about the same proportion of reported disagreement, in the 45–46 percent range.

In 1977 there was much more family conflict over helping around the house or doing yardwork than there had formerly been, for among both male and female students the largest percentage change occurred with respect to this item. On the other hand, there was less disagreement in 1977 over children's use of the family automobile, evenings away from home, and church-related issues. It is also noteworthy that the frequencies of reported disagreement about grades, spending money, student organizations, and hours for getting home at night were the same in 1977 as in 1924.

The figures in Table 4 also reveal the trend toward greater similarity between male and female students that has been noted earlier. In 1924 going to unchaperoned parties was a greater source of conflict for females than males; in 1977 the reported rates are the same. Compared to the males, female students in 1924 were more apt to report disagreements about home duties and less apt to report disagreement about school grades; in 1977 the male-female differences for both these sources of disagreement had decreased.

These findings do not support the notion that the generation gap was wider in 1977 than in 1924. There is some evidence of change in topics of disagreement, but the overall levels of disagreement are comparable and on many items the 1977 rates are remarkably like the 1924 rates.

Desirable parental characteristics. Student views about desirable characteristics in parents were elicited in responses to two questions, one referring to mothers and the other to fathers. In each, 10 characteristics were listed and respondents were asked to identify "the two qualities below that you consider most desirable." The characteristics for fathers included "being a college graduate," "spending time with his children . . .," "making plenty of money," "being an active church member," "owning a good-looking car," "being prominent in social life," "never nagging his children about what they do," "being well dressed," "having a love of music and poetry," and "respecting his children's opinions." Those listed for mothers were largely the same, except that "being a good cook and housekeeper" was substituted for "making plenty of money," and "being a good hostess" was substituted for "owning a good-looking car." There were also slight differences between the fathers' and mothers' versions of the "spending time with children" and "never nagging" questions.

If there has been an attrition of certain family functions, we might expect the characteristics of "good" parents in 1977 to differ from those in 1924. The student responses about "most desirable" characteristics of parents, summarized in Table 5, do reveal some sharp differences. But perhaps most notable is the 50-year consensus about the quality most desired in fathers. About two-thirds of the Middletown students of 1924 selected "spending time with his children" as one of the two most desired qualities of fathers, and no other quality had anywhere near that degree of consensus. In 1977, roughly the same proportion again selected "spending time with his children" as a most desirable paternal characteristic. In other words, what the students say they want from fathers is, more than anything else, for fathers to spend time with them.

Although the proportion of students saying that they think fathers should spend time with their children shows no change, the three characteristics selected next most frequently do change between 1924 and 1977. In 1924, 34 percent of the males and 42 percent of the females selected "respecting his children's opinions" as the next most important paternal characteristic. Although it was the second most frequently cited trait, it lagged far behind "spending time with his children" in frequency of mention. However, by 1977 it had increased in perceived importance to the point that for both males and females it was on a par with "spending time." The 1977 students clearly identified these two qualities of fathers as the most important ones in the list. No other trait commanded support by more than one-sixth of the students.

The two paternal characteristics selected by the next highest num-

Table 5. Percent of Students Identifying Selected Qualities[a] As One of the Two "Most Desirable" Qualities of Mothers and Fathers, by Sex, 1924 and 1977

	Males			*Females*		
	1924		*1977*	*1924*		*1977*
Qualities most desirable in a father						
Spending time with his children, reading, talking, playing, etc.[b]	62%		64%	67%		71%
Respecting his children's opinions	34	*	62	42	*	76
Being an active church member	27	*	7	30	*	7
Being a college graduate	23	*	4	13	*	4
Never nagging his children about what they do	12		13	12		12
Making plenty of money	12		17	11		10
Being well-dressed	6		6	5		4
Being prominent in social life	5		8	2	*	7
Having a love of music and poetry	4		1	6	*	2
Owning a good-looking car	3		5	2		2
Number of Cases (*N*)	(369)		(472)	(415)		(506)
Qualities most desirable in a mother						
Being a good cook and housekeeper	57	*	41	52	*	24
Spending time with her children, reading, talking, playing, etc.[c]	34	*	58	41	*	66
Being an active church member	25	*	8	25	*	9
Respecting her children's opinions	24	*	57	22	*	72
Never nagging her children about what they did	23	*	14	34	*	13
Being a college graduate	7	*	2	4		2
Being well-dressed	8		6	3		6
Having a love of music and poetry	6		2	3		1
Being a good hostess	4		2	4		2
Being prominent in social life	4	*	9	4		7
Number of cases (*N*)	(369)		(462)	(423)		(506)

[a] For each parent the question in 1977 read, "Please circle the *two* qualities in the list below that you consider most desirable in a mother" (or father). Inspection of the Lynds' questionnaire revealed that in 1924 they asked about the *four* most desirable qualities, but their published findings (1929:524) refer only to the first two qualities noted. Their item read: "Place a capital letter A before the 2 qualities below that you consider most desirable in a father [or, in the other item, mother] and a capital letter B before the 2 qualitites that you consider next most desirable."

[b] The 1924 question read, ". . . playing with them, etc."

[c] The 1924 question read, "Always having time to read, talk, go on picnics or play with her children."

[d] The 1924 question read, "Never losing her temper or nagging."

* Percentage differences between adjoining columns statistically significant at the .01 level.

bers of students in 1924 were "being an active church member" and "being a college graduate." In 1924 about one-fourth of the males selected each of these, and almost one-third of the girls listed "being an active church member" as highly desirable. The 1977 respondents did not consider either of them to be important. Thus the characteristics of the "model father," which in 1924 included spending time with his children, respecting their opinions, being an active church member, and (for male students at least) being a college graduate, had by 1977 shrunk to only two, spending time with children and respecting their opinions.

Student evaluation of qualities most desirable in mothers showed considerable change over the 53-year period, and several aspects of the maternal role have declined in importance. In 1977 students were less likely to rate cooking and housekeeping skills, active church participation, and "never nagging" as important qualities in a mother. Whereas in 1924 both males and females had rated being a good cook and housekeeper as the single most important quality for mothers, by 1977 this characteristic had dropped to third position. Much more important in 1977, particularly in the ratings by female students, were spending time with children and respecting the children's opinions, the same two qualities that had been ranked as most desirable in fathers. In other words, the parental traits deemed most desirable by Middletown students in 1977 were the same for both mothers and fathers.

There were few sex differences in perceptions of qualities desired in parents. The ratings by male and female students in 1924 were roughly parallel, and so were those in 1977 with the exception of two characteristics of mothers. Female students in 1977 were only about half as likely as males to rate a mother's cooking and housekeeping skills as important (24 percent, compared to 41 percent), and more of the females listed respect by a mother for her children's opinions as highly desirable.

Finally, there is much more consensus about desirable parental qualities among the 1977 respondents than there was in 1924, and the consensus is highest among females, almost three-fourths of whom rate respecting their children's opinions as the most desirable quality of mothers and fathers. These findings must be interpreted cautiously because we are limited to the 10 qualities of the Lynds' list, but it seems that the range of desirable parental characteristics has narrowed somewhat and is much more focused on direct parent-child relationships of an emotional or expressive nature than on the parents' participation or status in nonfamily institutions.

Summary and Discussion

The interpretation of changes in Middletown's family values and behavior is complicated, for Middletown has changed since 1924 in demographic and institutional character. Some of the demographic changes can be illustrated with census data. The Lynds do not report figures for median educational attainment for the city in 1920, but contrasts between 1940 and 1970 are sufficient to make the point: today's residents are far better educated than their parents or grandparents were. In 1940 the median years of school completed for adults 25 and over in Middletown were 8.7 for males and 9.0 for females; by 1970 the corresponding figures were 11.8 and 11.6. More directly relevant to a high school survey, young people in Middletown of 1977 were far more likely to attend school than their 1920 counterparts. According to the census reports, in 1920, 76 percent of the city's 14- to 15-year-olds were enrolled in school, compared to 99 percent in 1970, and among the 16- to 17-year-olds in 1920 only 30 percent were in school, compared to 77 percent in 1970. Thus, the high school juniors and seniors represented in the Lynds' data were statistically an elite, whereas in 1977 the great majority of young people under age 18 were still in school.

Statistics on employment also illustrate Middletown's changing composition. Compared to the situation in 1970, employed adults of 1920 were far more likely to work in manufacturing (64 percent, compared to 46 percent), less likely to be directly employed by the government (less than 2 percent were in the category "public service" in 1920, compared to 13 percent in 1970), and less likely to be in professional occupations (6 percent, as opposed to 12 percent in 1970). The student reports about family life undoubtedly reflect the compositional as well as the generational changes which have occurred.

We have compared student reports about the number of evenings they spend at home, the sources of their spending money and of their knowledge about sex, their perceptions of topics about which they and their parents disagree, and the qualities they define as most desirable in mothers and fathers. The 1977 students differ from those of 1924 in that: (1) females spend more evening time away from home; (2) males (but not females) are more likely to have fixed allowances, and students of both sexes are more likely to earn their own money; (3) they are much less likely to receive their sex information from their parents, and, for females, friends play a much greater role in the transmission of sex knowledge; (4) helping with household tasks, which was not a major source of family conflict in 1924, has become a major source of family disagreement; (5) respect for homemaking skills as a desirable characteristic of mothers has declined; and (6) the importance of parental respect for children's opinions has increased markedly.

If it could be shown that substantial class differences exist today in the items we have discussed, it might plausibly be argued that changes in Middletown's class composition have produced these intergenerational shifts in student responses. Inasmuch as the Lynds did not publish breakdowns of these items by social class, a direct test of this notion is not possible. However, it is possible to compare modern students' responses with respect to the working class–business class differences in fathers' occupation, which the Lynds argued was so central to life in Middletown. Accordingly, for each of the five major variables considered in this paper, class and sex controls were added for the entire (freshmen through seniors) 1977 sample of Middletown high school students.

No significant differences by class emerged for sources of sex information. Within the same-sex groupings, there was never more than a 6 percent difference between young people from working class and business class (i.e., blue-collar and white-collar) families. For number of evenings spent at home, there was a significant difference for males but not females: males from blue-collar families were more likely than white-collar males to be away from home every night (26 percent versus 16 percent, respectively). The only social class difference in sources of spending money was that working class children were more likely to say that they asked their parents for money as needed.

In qualities judged desirable in a father, there were no social class differences; in qualities judged desirable in a mother, blue-collar children, both males and females, were significantly more likely to select "good homemaker" as a desirable maternal quality (for males, 42 percent versus 34 percent, and for females 29 percent versus 17 percent), and the white-collar females were significantly more likely than the other females to select "respecting her children's opinions" as a desirable quality (77 percent versus 68 percent, respectively). There were several class differences in topics of disagreements with parents, including significant differentials for both males and females with respect to "the people you choose as friends" and "your grades at school." In both cases, young people from blue-collar families reported the highest rates of conflict. Home duties were cited as a significant source of conflict more frequently by blue-collar females than by white-collar females.

The minor class differentials in evenings away from home, sources of spending money, and sources of sex information are too small to support the argument that the 1925–77 changes are primarily a consequence of changing class composition. If white-collar children were more likely than blue-collar children to report conflict with parents over household tasks, that would be evidence for the greater "middle-classification" of Middletown as an explanation for the increased rate of family conflict over household tasks, but the present class differential runs the other way. Thus, only for the item on qualities desirable in a mother are the existing class differences such that an increase in the relative size of the business class (white-collar) population could be expected to have produced the kinds of change which the 50-year comparisons reveal. In other words, if we may generalize backward from present social class differences, it appears that most of the changes in family characteristics we have identified are not attributable to changes in the social class composition of Middletown.

Do these changes support the Lynds' notion about the declining centrality of the family and the growing gap between parents and their children? Many of these findings may be interpreted as evidence for a continued attrition of family function. Such attrition may be inferred from the greater student consensus about parents' spending time with and respecting their children's opinions as the most desired parental qualities. It is directly evident in the decline in student support for homemaking skills as an essential characteristic of mothers, the decline in the role of parents in the sex education of their children, the increased tendency of female students to spend evenings away from home and to get their spending money from employment, and in the heightened student resistance to doing household tasks, as indicated by the increase in parent-child disagreement over this topic.

Although there is evidence for some continued decline in the centrality of the family, particularly in the lives of the female students, there is no evidence in these data that the generation gap in 1977 is any wider than it was in 1924. Indeed, the much higher value placed on parental respect for children's opinions and the continued affirmation that parents should spend time with their children suggest that the expressive/emotional function of the family is more important for Middletown students of 1977 than it was in 1924.

Most of the comparisons discussed above support the linkage between modernization and the attrition of certain family functions described by the Lynds. There are some inconsistencies, and several instances where the patterns described in 1924 still seem to apply. But where change has occurred, it has generally been in the anticipated direction. The continued impact of modernization upon the family ties of Middletown's young people is most apparent upon young women, such that many of the male-female differences apparent in 1924 have now disappeared. Finally, although certain family functions seem to have declined in importance, there is no evidence that there is greater alienation between parents and youth in 1977 than in 1924. In fact, greater emphasis upon time together and mutual respect may have increased some types of family solidarity.

References

Adams, Bert N.
1975 The Family: A Sociological Interpretation, 2nd ed. Chicago: Rand McNally.
Caplow, Theodore, and Howard M. Bahr
1979 "Half a century of attitude change in Middletown," Public Opinion Quarterly 43:1–17.
Lynd, Robert S., and Helen Merrell Lynd
1929 Middletown: A Study in American Culture. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World.
1937 Middletown in Transition: A Study in Cultural Conflicts. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World.
Ogburn, William F.
1933 "The Family and Its Functions," Chap. 13 in Recent Social Trends. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Time of Decision and Media Use During the Ford-Carter Campaign

STEVEN H. CHAFFEE AND SUN YUEL CHOE

FALL PRESIDENTIAL election campaigns have for three decades been thought to have little impact on the vote, owing to a paradoxical relationship between media use and the time at which the voter makes his final decision. Since the pioneering work of Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and their colleagues (1944; 1954), the electorate has been pictured in terms of a dichotomous model: citizens fall into either of two possible categories, each of which is impervious to political mass communication for a quite different reason. On the one hand, there is a large group of precommitted voters. As Pool (1963) has described them, the precommitted are partisans who "are inclined to read about politics or to listen to political speeches" but who "already have strong views which are not going to be changed in the eight weeks of an election campaign." And then there are the rest of the voters, who make up their minds seemingly at the last minute. They are less opinionated

---

Abstract This paper challenges the traditional belief that a full presidential political campaign can have only "limited effects" on voting, by identifying a group of voters who make their decisions during the campaign rather than either prior to or very late in the campaign. In a panel study of Wisconsin voters in the 1976 election, 40 percent were Campaign Deciders. These voters were low in partisanship, but paid close attention to the campaign and the Ford-Carter debates, and voted in accordance with campaign-specific perceptions. By contrast, both Pre-campaign Deciders and Last-minute Deciders voted mainly on the basis of party identification.

Steven H. Chaffee is Vilas Research Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication, and Sun Yuel Choe is a doctoral candidate in mass communications, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This study, conducted in the Mass Communications Research Center at the university, is based upon a study of the Ford-Carter debates in which the authors collaborated with Prof. Jack Dennis. Data were collected by the Wisconsin Survey Research Laboratory. Support for data collection was provided mainly by the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University
Published by Elsevier North Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/80/0044-053/$1.75

and correlatively more persuasible than the early deciders, but they are also less interested and consequently pay little attention to political news. They are unaffected by the media not because of resistance, but simply because of lack of exposure (Berelson and Steiner, 1964).

There are numerous recent examples of this dichotomous analysis. For instance, Buchanan (1977) summarizes prior research as demonstrating "that relatively few people changed their opinions during a campaign and that those who did were more likely to have been influenced by primary group pressures than by the issue appeals of the candidates; . . . and that 'independent' or shifting voters were not issue-oriented in their outlook." Katz (1973) paints a similar picture: "Typically about 80 percent, or more, of the voters have made up their minds about the vote before the campaign begins, that is at least several months prior to the election. . . . The changers—those who shift from one party to another *during* the campaign—have been found to be relatively uninterested in the election and its outcome . . . [and] are not much exposed to mass communications about politics" (emphasis his). McCombs (1972) agrees: "Those who make their vote decisions . . . before the fall campaign gets underway . . . make greater use of the media than the voter who enters the campaign period uncommitted or undecided." In all of these instances, the studies of elections in the 1940s are cited as the source of empirical support for the conclusion.

Theoretical Issues

The "limited effects" or "minimal consequences" assumption that has been derived from these dichotomous contrasts can be broken down into the following causal propositions:

1. Partisan precommitment is sufficient to preclude campaign effects.
2. Partisan precommitment is necessary to produce interest in the election.
3. Interest in the election is necessary to produce exposure to the campaign.
4. Exposure to the campaign is necessary for media effects.

The first of these statements is adequate to predict limited (at most) effects for those who identify strongly with a party and who consequently decide how they will vote before the campaign begins. (While statement 1 is an obvious oversimplification, we will not digress into its merits here.) The remaining three statements comprise a chain of requirements that in the dichotomous model have been used to predict limited effects for the entire remainder of the voters—who are all presumed to lack interest because they lack partisanship (statement 2). But while statement 4 is true almost by definition, there is no clear theoretical reasoning behind statements 2 and 3. They are based upon empirical correlations that were apparently strong in the 1940s, but they are dubious as causal propositions. Given the many changes in politics and mass communication in the intervening 30 years, there is reason to consider more current evidence and the possibility of theoretical revision.

Regarding statement 2, partisanship has been steadily declining since the 1950s, both in absolute terms and in the power of party identification to predict voting behavior (Nie, et al., 1976). But the lack of corresponding evidence of a decline in political interest suggests that the two variables are not closely related in a functional sense and that the empirical correlation between them may have diminished.[1] Regarding statement 3, the emergence of television as the principal vehicle for political campaigning (Barber, 1978) has probably reduced the amount of motivation required for a person to become exposed to campaign messages. While in the 1940s it probably did require some specific effort to follow the campaign in the newspapers of Erie County (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944) and Elmira (Berelson et al., 1954), today's voter would have to go to some lengths to *avoid* exposure to the many political advertisements and newscasts that are broadcast. Such modern campaign events as televised debates are witnessed by some 80 to 90 percent of the electorate (Katz and Feldman, 1962; Sears and Chaffee, 1979). For statement 3 to remain valid in the face of this ubiquitous campaign exposure, political interest would have had to become much more widespread than was the case in the pretelevision era. While interest may be *sufficient* to stimulate added exposure, it is likely that incidental exposure also stimulates interest in the campaign. There does not seem to be a unidirectional causal process at work; recent historical evidence suggests that campaign interest and television attention have risen together (Nie et al., 1976:2).

A weakening of the presumed linkages from partisanship to campaign interest via exposure (statements 2 and 3) would imply that there has emerged a sizable voting group that is indeed interested and attentive to political content in the media, but not so partisan and precommitted as to be unaffected by the campaign and its coverage. As Katz (1973) suggests, "The combination of a low degree of [party] loyalty and yet some exposure to election communication has become a more probable combination in the era of television than ever before." The decision-making processes of such a voter would be of particular interest to students of mass communication; the amount and quality of campaign coverage by the media would be much more important factors if there are significant numbers of voters who defer their decisions until they have a chance to compare the candidates during the final months of intense campaigning.

---

[1] There seems to have been a slight tendency toward lower voter turnout in recent years. The apparent decline in party identification has, however, been much more striking statistically.

Research Hypotheses

The purpose of this paper is to develop a model of voter decision making that involves complex relationships among partisanship, mass media use, and cognitions about candidates derived from an election campaign. Our central assumption is that vote decisions can be made on the basis of either preexisting partisan commitments *or* exposure to the campaign (or both). Empirically these two classes of voting decisions should be differentially associated with precampaign and campaign-specific cognitions, communication, and predictor variables.

Time of decision would be dependent on the class of information the voter relies upon. Precampaign decisions must be based on precampaign cognitions, such as party identification and its socioeconomic and ideological correlates. Those who lack strong precampaign decision cues must rely more on campaign-specific cognitions about the candidates and their policy positions; they should be more likely to decide *during* the campaign period when information of this type is most available. Those who lack both kinds of information—i.e., whose party identification is weak, and who lack campaign-specific information because of nonexposure—should be the most likely to remain undecided until the last days of the campaign.

The fall 1976 contest between Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter was rich in candidate-specific information, largely because of the series of televised debates that juxtaposed the two contenders in a comparative and issue-oriented format (Chaffee, 1978; Sears and Chaffee, 1979). Given this easily accessible information, an attentive voter could have formed a fairly clear picture of the differences between the candidates after a few weeks. Many undecided voters entered the campaign period with "tentative" decisions or feelings of "leaning" toward one candidate. With heavy information flow, these decisions could be crystallized without waiting until the last minute. The Ford-Carter campaign, then, was one in which we should find a substantial group of voters who do not fit the traditional description of either group in the dichotomous model of prior electoral research.

We will call this third group Campaign Deciders and distinguish them from the other groups, which we will characterize here as Precampaign Deciders and Last-minute Deciders.

We postulate that precampaign cognitions and campaign information flow are two independent variables that lead to voting decisions made at different times. For purposes of data analysis, we will use time of decision as a sorting variable, comparing the three groups of voters for evidence of differential information-holding, communication, and decision-making processes. Strong precampaign decision cues should differentiate Precampaign Deciders from those who are undecided at the start of the campaign, and strong within-campaign decision cues should differentiate Campaign Deciders from those who remain undecided near the end of the campaign. This pattern should manifest itself in terms of both the strength of political cognitions and communication activity, and the degree to which the person's vote is predicted by precampaign vs. campaign-specific cognitions.

As in prior studies, we expect that the Precampaign Deciders will be higher than other voters in socioeconomic status. More important, we hypothesize specifically that they will exhibit greater campaign communications (mass and interpersonal) and perceived differentiation between the candidates *prior to the fall campaign*. Decisions made by the Campaign Deciders should be associated with increased communication activity, especially attention to the highly accessible information about the candidates provided by television, and with strengthened perceptions of differences between the candidates *during the campaign*.

In directional analyses of vote decisions, we hypothesize qualitative differences in the determinants of Precampaign and Campaign Deciders' choices. Decisions made prior to the campaign should be most strongly predicted by precampaign cognitions such as party identification. Within-campaign decisions, however, should be more strongly predicted by campaign-specific cognitions, such as perceived differences between the candidates in this particular election.

These hypotheses leave us with little to say about the voting decisions of the Last-minute Deciders. We expect them to be lacking in all varieties of decision cues that we have mentioned, both precampaign and campaign-specific. Consequently we should expect to account for less of the variation in their votes by the variables we have discussed here, such as party identification and differentiation between the candidates. Some writers have asserted that Last-Minute Deciders are influenced mainly by interpersonal communication rather than by the media (Berelson et al., 1954; Pool, 1963). There is no systematic data analysis to support this conclusion in the main source cited, however (Lazarsfeld et al., 1948). While we will not attempt to examine interpersonal *influence* here, our other hypotheses (above) include the prediction that the Last-minute Deciders will be the group *lowest* in interpersonal discussion both prior to and during the campaign. Prior research has shown a close association between frequency of interpersonal discussion of a topic and attention to it in the mass media (Chaffee, 1972), and most interpersonal influence attempts are directed at people who are in turn making similar influence attempts themselves (Troldahl and Van Dam, 1965; O'Keefe, 1975). In a recent study of young voters in a British election, Blumler and McLeod (1974) found that those who remained undecided late in the campaign were less interested, less attentive to the media, *and* less likely to discuss the election with their families.

Overall, then, we expect to replicate prior research that has distinguished between Precampaign and Last-minute Deciders, but to point up the possibility of significant campaign effects on a third group, who come to their decisions during the campaign period. We do not expect the Campaign Deciders to be simply waiting, but rather to be waiting for information that will come to them via the news media as the campaign progresses. We expect them to increase their communication activity to get that information, and then to use it in making their voting decisions. By contrast, we do expect the Last-minute Deciders to be uninvolved voters who have simply waited, without paying much attention to the campaign, and consequently not to make their decisions on the basis of campaign-specific information.

Design and Measurement

Our data collection design was a four-wave panel survey of a statewide random sample of Wisconsin citizens during the fall of 1976 (see Dennis and Chaffee, 1978). The first wave of interviews was conducted in the week prior to the first Ford-Carter debate (held September 23), and the second wave in the week following that debate. Wave 3 occurred following the final debate (October 23 through November 1), and the final wave following the November 2 election. All interviews were conducted by telephone, and sampling was based on a probability sample of area codes and telephone prefixes, followed by four random digits. Three callbacks were tried before a number was abandoned. Within households, adults were selected randomly according to a predetermined schedule. The panel consisted of $N = 164$ persons who were interviewed in each of the four waves. Of those who reported their votes in the postelection interview, 49.6 percent said they had voted for Carter, and 48.9 percent for Ford; these figures are quite close to the actual Wisconsin vote, of which Carter received 49.4 percent and Ford 47.8 percent.

In measuring time of final decision, we assumed that the period of heaviest campaign information flow occurred between the first and third waves of interviewing. All of the televised debates, which were the most prominent public communication events of the campaign, took place in this time period. Working back in time from the person's reported vote (Time 4), each voter was classified according to the earliest time at which he or she expressed a definite and lasting intention to vote that way.[2] Those who voted but had still not been certain of their intention even at Time 3 are the Last-minute Deciders. Those who had definitely decided by the time of the first interview, and who never expressed uncertainty in subsequent interviews, are the Precampaign Deciders. The remainder, who first said they had definitely made their voting decisions in either the Time 2 or Time 3 interview, are grouped for our analysis as Campaign Deciders.

The wording of various interview questions was standardized so that responses from one wave to another would be comparable. In each wave, we measured attention to campaign content via television, and via newspapers and magazines; discussion about the campaign; perceptions of candidates' personal qualities and abilities, or image; their own positions, and those they perceived the candidates as holding, on several issues; their party identification; and political ideology (liberal-conservative). Five-point response scales were used for all issue, image, and ideology questions. Several standard demographic measures were included, mostly in Wave 1. In Waves 2 and 3, additional questions were asked about the extent to which the debate(s) immediately preceding that interview had been watched and discussed.

Image measures consisted of the rating assigned to Ford or Carter on each of the following attributes: honesty and integrity, strength and decisiveness, capacity for effective leadership of the government, making clear his position on the issues, and ability to inspire confidence by the way he speaks. These five items were highly intercorrelated, forming a single factor; a sixth scale, friendly and pleasant, was dropped after factor analysis indicated it did not load strongly with the other five. In the case of issues, one of the four that were included in the questionnaire was dropped after item analyses showed it to have extremely weak discriminating power. The deleted issue item dealt with abortion; the three that were retained for summary analyses had to do with government efforts to alleviate unemployment, reform of the tax system, and defense expenditures (see Dennis et al., 1979).

---

[2] Voters were classified as not yet finally decided even if they had a preference but declined in response to a probe to say they were "certain" of their intentions, or "definitely" would vote that way. We found many cases who considered themselves definite/certain at Time 1, but who were less sure in a later interview; these are classified by the final expression of definite/certain vote intention, not the first.

Two distinct kinds of indices were constructed from the five image and three issue items. One set of indices provides estimates of the degree to which the respondent saw differences between the candidates; these are called *candidate discrimination* measures. Image Discrimination was calculated by subtracting the rating of Ford on each measure from that of Carter, and summing these absolute differences. Issue Discrimination consisted of the absolute difference between the positions the respondent perceived Ford and Carter as holding on each of the three issues, and summing these differences. The image and issue discrimination indices were highly intercorrelated (r = .61 in the total sample), which is to say that those who saw large differences between the candidates as individuals also tended to perceive large policy differences.

The second set of indices based on the image and issue items were directional measures of *candidate evaluations*. For the image items, it was assumed that all of the attributes (honesty, strength, leadership, etc.) were positive evaluations; separate indices of favorable ratings of Ford and of Carter were first calculated, and then Ford's were subtracted from Carter's to create a net evaluation scale. Favorable ratings on the issue items were assumed to be relative to the respondent's own positions. For each issue, the Ford-self and Carter-self distances were calculated, and then the latter was subtracted from the former to create a net score; these net distances were summed across the three issues. These directional net evaluation measures, all signed in the same (pro-Carter) direction, were used as predictors of the vote in data analysis.

Party identification was measured by a conventional series of branching questions that produced a 7-point scale ranging from "strong Democrat" to "weak" or "leaning" or "independent" categories, and on to "strong Republican." A 4-point measure of partisanship was created by folding over the party identification scale so that "strong" adherents of either party were grouped together, as were "weak" identifiers, etc. A 5-point liberal-conservative scale was similarly folded over, to create a 3-point measure of strength of ideology.

Analyses and Results

Approximately 40 percent of the voters in our panel were classified as Campaign Deciders, and the remainder were almost equally divided between Precampaign Deciders and Last-minute Deciders. Different operational criteria, and a different election campaign, might have yielded fewer Campaign Deciders, but it is clear that they are a substantial group in this instance at least.

A preliminary overview of the distinctiveness of the Campaign Deciders is provided in Table 1. Here a number of precampaign and within-campaign measures are presented; all means have been converted to standard scores to facilitate comparisons between rows. No statistical tests are reported in Table 1, since we have not hypothesized univariate differences among the three groups. Before we turn to tests of our hypotheses about decided vs. undecided voters at various stages of the campaign, however, Table 1 is worth some consideration. The data are in line with most of our assumptions

Table 1. Precampaign and Within-Campaign Comparisons (Standard Scores), by Time of Decision

	Precampaign Deciders	*Campaign Deciders*	*Last-minute Deciders*
Precampaign measures (Time 1)			
Ideological strength	+15	−17	+09
Partisanship strength	+22	−13	−05
Education	+20	−04	−15
Income	+14	+10	−27
Television precampaign attention	+16	−04	−04
Newspaper/magazine precampaign attention	+19	−02	−16
Discussion of campaign	+36	−04	−30
Issue discrimination	+22	−02	−18
Image discrimination	+54	−19	−28
Within-campaign measures (Time 2 and 3)			
Television campaign attention	−03	+29	−35
Newspaper/magazine campaign attention	+11	+18	−34
Discussion of campaign	+24	+06	−32
Viewing of debates	−13	+18	−34
Discussion of debates	+10	+08	−20
Issue discrimination (Time 3)	+31	−05	−23
Image discrimination (Time 3)	+42	+05	−47
	(*N*=41)	(*N*=56)	(*N*=42)

NOTE: For each row in this table, raw data were converted to standard scores by subtracting the mean for the total sample from each group mean, and dividing this deviation score by the overall standard deviation. Scores have been multiplied by 100 for simplicity.

about the nature of the three groups. Perhaps the most noteworthy finding is the stepped-up communication activity of the Campaign Deciders during the campaign period. The expected Time 1 differences between the Precampaign Deciders and the Last-minute Deciders, in terms of partisanship, socioeconomic status, communication, and candidate discrimination, are quite marked. These differences do not change much in magnitude during the campaign, but for campaign-related measures the standard scores at Time 3 are altered (while remaining about as far apart as before) because of changes in the Campaign Deciders.

PREDICTING DECISION TIME

To test our hypotheses about different factors in vote decisions made at different times, we performed two multiple discriminant analyses.[3] The first of these examines differences between Precampaign Deciders and all other voters in terms of the precampaign variables listed in Table 2. The second analysis then contrasts the remaining voters (Campaign Deciders vs. Last-minute Deciders) in terms of the within-campaign variables from the lower portion of Table 1.

The first multiple discriminant analysis is summarized in Table 2. Four of the nine Time 1 variables survived the stepwise selection process and this function explains 23 percent of the total group-

Table 2. Time 1 Discriminant Analysis: Precampaign Deciders vs. Others

	Function 1[a]
Image discrimination	.785
Discussion about campaign	.351
Education	.331
Partisanship	.240
Canonical correlation	.434
$\chi^2 = 28.24$, $p < .001$	
Centroids of groups in reduced space	
Precampaign deciders	−.280
All undecided at Time 1	.669

[a] Entries are standardized discriminant coefficients.

NOTE: These results represent a discriminant analysis between the Precampaign Deciders and the combined Campaign Deciders and Last-minute Deciders. The nine precampaign measures shown in Table 1 were entered in this analysis; only the significant variables are listed here.

---

[3] Stepwise selection starts with the best single predictor variable and combines it with each of the other predictors separately to find the pair that provides the greatest statistical separation between the groups. This pair is then combined with each remaining predictor separately to find the best triplet. This process continues until none of the remaining predictors significantly improves the discrimination between groups (Morrison, 1969, 1974; Tatsouka, 1971).

difference variance. A person's vote decision status at the beginning of the campaign is determined by the combined effect of partisanship, education, prior discussion, and image discrimination, to list them in ascending order of their importance in the discriminant function. These findings are consistent with our hypotheses and with prior research. Precampaign decisions are made predominantly by voters who are well educated, partisan, actively discussing the campaign even before the period of heaviest information flow from the media, and who already see large differences between the candidates. When these differences are taken into account, the levels of media use reported in Table 1 do not add to the discrimination between Precampaign Deciders and undecided voters.

A classification analysis was performed to check the validity of the discriminant function in Table 2. On the basis of a weighted linear combination of scores of the four predictor variables, 78 percent of our respondents were correctly classified in terms of the decision status at Time 1 ($t = 4.93$, $p < .01$).[4]

The second discriminant analysis, which focuses on decision making during the campaign period, is summarized in Table 3. The discriminant function in this case consists of two equally weighted variables, and explains 21 percent of the total variance between the Campaign Deciders and the Last-minute Deciders. One variable from the first discriminant function, image discrimination, is also included in this one; we should emphasize, however, that in this case it is the Time 3 image discrimination that differentiates the groups, whereas in Table 2 it was the Time 1 measure of the same variable. The other factor of importance in Table 3 is attention to the campaign via television. This

Table 3. Time 3 Discriminant Analysis: Campaign Deciders vs. Last-minute Deciders

	Function I[a]
Attention to campaign via TV (Times 2 & 3)	.652
Image discrimination (Time 3)	.651
Canonical correlation	.415
$\chi^2 = 18.00$, $p < .001$	
Centroids of groups in reduced space	
Campaign deciders	.358
Last-minute deciders	−.377

[a] Entries are standardized discriminant coefficients.

NOTE: These results represent a discriminant analysis between the Campaign Deciders and the Last-minute Deciders only. The seven within-campaign measures shown in Table 1 were entered in this analysis; only the significant variables are listed here.

---

[4] There is an upward bias in classifying the same individuals who were used to calculate the discriminant function (Frank et al., 1965). The proportion of cases correctly classified in the sample might be greater than it would be for the true population. We were unable, however, to perform an adjustment in this analysis owing to the small sample size.

provides empirical support for our assumption that TV has become a key factor in reducing the correlation between partisanship and exposure so that a group like the Campaign Deciders would emerge in significant numbers. Classification analysis showed that 69 percent of Campaign Deciders and Late Deciders were correctly predicted on the basis of the function defined in Table 3 ($t = 3.68$, $p<.01$).

Other communication differences between the Campaign Deciders and Last-minute Deciders (see Table 1) did not add significantly to the discriminant function in Table 3. Some additional points of differentiation of the Campaign Deciders are worth noting in this connection, however. In a multiple regression analysis (Chaffee and Choe, 1978), we found a significant interaction between campaign deciders (dummy variable) and precampaign media attention, as predictors of within-campaign media attention. The within-campaign attention levels of the Campaign Deciders were the least well predicted by precampaign attention ($p<.05$) and higher than the other two groups ($p<.01$).

The robustness of this finding was tested in a multiple polynominal regression analysis (Cohen and Cohen, 1975), in which the Campaign Deciders were split into two groups, those who had decided by T_2 (after the first debate) and those who did not decide until after the last debate (T_3). This analysis produced only a significant quadratic function ($F = 5.58$, $p<.05$), among the three possible functions representing different hypothetical curves. This quadratic function corresponds to a curve that is low in media campaign attention for the Precampaign and Last-minute Deciders, and high for both groups of Campaign Deciders.

Two items regarding the televised debates further strengthen the conclusion that Campaign Deciders were particularly attentive to campaign-specific information. This group was significantly higher than the other two combined in reporting the perception that the debates had helped in understanding the candidates' positions on issues ($\chi^2 = 6.57$, $p<.05$), and that the debates were helpful in judging the abilities of the candidates ($\chi^2 = 5.21$, $p<.05$). In each case, 60 percent of the Campaign Deciders reported these reactions, compared with about 40 percent of the other groups on the average.

PREDICTING THE VOTE

Our evidence to this point establishes clear differences among the three time-of-decision groups in their communication behavior during the campaign, and in their precampaign decision cues, which are closely in accord with our hypotheses. The major empirical question remaining from those we originally raised is the extent to which these precampaign and campaign-specific cues affected the votes cast. For this analysis we turn to directional measures and limit ourselves to the major correlates of the vote: party identification (precampaign), and candidate evaluations (campaign-specific).

Table 4 summarizes the results of hierarchical regression analyses of the votes of each of the three groups. The first block of independent variables entered in this analysis is the measure of party identification. Then a second block, consisting of the Image Evaluations and Issue Evaluations of the candidates at Time 3 is added to the equation. We assume that the latter measures constitute our best evidence of information specific to the choice between Ford and Carter that a voter could have accumulated from the campaign. The hierarchical regression procedure allows us to remove the variance in these evaluations that is attributable to prior party identification, before assessing the variance in voting contributed by these campaign-specific evaluations. (We cannot rule out the influence of candidate evaluations developed prior to the fall campaign; the evidence in Tables 1 and 2 suggests that the Precampaign Deciders would have been most likely to form such perceptions earlier in the campaign year.)

Several important hypotheses are tested in Table 4. The most critical is the prediction that precampaign attachments would be more important determinants of the vote for Precampaign Deciders, whereas campaign-specific cognitions would be more important for Campaign Deciders. This contrasting set of hypotheses is definitely supported. Looking at the incremental R^2 values for each block of

Table 4. Predictors of the Vote, by Time of Decision (Hierarchical Regression)

Predictor of Vote		*Precampaign Deciders*	*Campaign Deciders*	*Last-minute Deciders*
Party identification (Time 1)	beta	.29**	.11	.62***
(R^2 for block)		(.55)	(.23)	(.51)
Issue evaluations (Time 3)	beta	.33**	.21*	.03
Image evaluations (Time 3)	beta	.42***	.63***	.15
(R^2 for block)		(.28)	(.49)	(.02)
(Total R^2)		(.83)	(.72)	(.53)

NOTE: R^2 values indicate incremental variance explained in successive equations in hierarchical regression analysis. Beta weights are from final equation.

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

predictors, precampaign partisan ties account for 55 percent of the variance in Precampaign Deciders' votes, whereas only 28 percent can be attributed to evaluations specific to the candidates in this campaign after party identification has been controlled. For the Campaign Deciders the figures are approximately the reverse: only 23 percent attributable to party identification, but 49 percent to campaign-specific candidate evaluations. Indeed, the beta weight for party identification in the final multivariate equation is nonsignificant for the Campaign Deciders. Put in terms of proportionate variance accounted for by this set of predictors, precampaign cues account for about twice as much of the explained variance among Precampaign Deciders as they do among Campaign Deciders.

A most striking—and unanticipated—finding in Table 4 is the dominance of party identification in the voting decisions of Last-minute Deciders. This group is, as we had hypothesized, less predictable than the others, as indicated by the lower total R^2 based on our predictor variables. But almost all of this explained variance is accounted for by party identification, even though the Last-minute Deciders are *not* strongly partisan (see Table 1). Apparently when these voters finally do decide, with campaign-specific cues absent because of lack of attention to the campaign, their latent partisan predispositions are activated. This finding is contrary to the picture usually painted of Last-minute Deciders as nonpartisan. It does add to our overall stress on the importance of exposure to the campaign coupled with weak partisan ties, as a necessary set of conditions for campaign impact. The key point to be stressed again is the difference between Campaign Deciders and Last-minute Deciders, a distinction neglected in prior research.

In our data collection and in Table 4, we have adhered to the standard distinction between "image" and "issue" evaluations. But this may be more of a researcher's convention than a clearcut theoretical difference. The two indices are highly intercorrelated, and we suspect that issue positions, like party affiliations, gradually get absorbed into the more global personal images voters attribute to candidates. The relatively stronger relationships between image evaluations and various criteria in this study are likely due to lesser reliability and restricted variance of the issue-difference measures.

Discussion

A revision of the previously accepted theoretical scheme outlined at the beginning of this paper seems in order. One essential link in that limited-effects chain of reasoning appears to be incorrect as we had hypothesized. That is the presumed relationship between partisanship and exposure to the campaign, which has been thought to be mediated by interest. There is a substantial group of less partisan voters who, while not much interested prior to the campaign, pay close attention to the heavy flow of information during the campaign and vote on the basis of this information.[5] The following statements are more consonant with the current evidence:

1. Partisan precommitment is sufficient to preclude campaign effects.
2. In the absence of precommitment, those exposed to the campaign will make their decisions primarily on the basis of campaign-specific information.
3. Those who are not exposed to the campaign will make their decisions on the basis of weak cues, such as latent party identification.

The first statement here is identical to that in our earlier paraphrasing of the traditional theory. Statements 2 and 3 approximately describe the Campaign Deciders and Last-minute Deciders, respectively. The latter group, about whose voting we still understand rather little, seems to fit Ray's (1973) characterization of "low involvement" consumers, who are highly susceptible to superficial influences such as television advertising. Further research might, then, show that Last-minute Deciders are also open to media campaign effects, although not in the same way as Campaign Deciders, who utilize campaign information extensively.

Further research is necessary to determine whether these findings represent a general pattern in which many voters make their decisions during the campaign period on the basis of heavy information flow, or if this result was a peculiarity of the 1976 campaign. Several studies have shown that some voters delayed making final decisions until they could compare Ford and Carter in the debates (Sears and Chaffee, 1979). In landslide elections with less information flow (e.g., 1964, 1972) the traditional dichotomous model of early vs. late deciders might hold, as it apparently did in the era when party identification was much stronger and television not a factor (1940, 1948). In

---

[5] In an earlier report of this study (Chaffee and Choe, 1978) we compared the results in Table 1 with supplementary data from two other debates panel studies that were conducted in midwestern cities. While exact replication was impossible because of differing data collection designs, the findings generally coincided with the main conclusions reported here. The Precampaign Deciders were in all samples highly partisan, whereas the Campaign Deciders were distinguished mainly by heavy attention to the news media, with emphasis on debates and television, during the campaign.

1976 we were dealing with a campaign in which an unusually large number of voters were unsure of their choices, the candidates were new to presidential campaigning, and debates provided an extraordinary amount of bipartisan campaign-specific information in a highly accessible channel. After the 1960 election, when similar conditions obtained, Pool (1963) concluded that the debates had been "the decisive event" of the campaign. He treated this instance as an isolated exception to the general rule of limited effects, but it now appears that we should assume stronger potential campaign impact in future elections when those conditions recur.

References

Barber, James David (ed.)
1978 Race for the Presidency: The Media and the Nominating Process. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Berelson, Bernard, Paul Lazarsfeld, and John McPhee
1954 Voting. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Berelson, Bernard, and Gary Steiner
1964 Human Behavior. New York: Harcourt Brace and World.

Blumler, Jay G., and Jack M. McLeod
1974 "Communication and voter turnout in Britain." In Timothy Leggatt (ed.), Sociological Theory and Survey Research. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Buchanan, William
1977 "American institutions and political behavior." In Donald M. Freeman (ed.), Foundation of Political Science. New York: Free Press.

Chaffee, Steven H.
1972 "The interpersonal context of mass communication." In F. Gerald Kline and Phillip J. Tichenor (eds.), Current Perspectives in Mass Communication Research. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications.
1978 "Presidential debates—are they helpful to voters?" Communication Monographs. 45:330–46.

Chaffee, Steven H. and Sun Yuel Choe
1978 "Time of decision and media use during the Ford-Carter campaign." Paper presented at the convention of the Association for Education in Journalism, Seattle.

Cohen, Jacob, and Patricia Cohen
1975 Applied Multiple Regression/Correlation Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences. New York: Wiley.

Dennis, Jack, and Steven H. Chaffee
1978 "Legitimation in the 1976 U.S. election campaign." Communication Research 5:371–94.

Dennis, Jack, Steven H. Chaffee, and Sun Yuel Choe
1979 "Impact upon partisan, image, and issue voting." In Sidney Kraus (ed.), The Great Debates, 1976: Ford vs. Carter. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.

Frank, Ronald E., William F. Massy, and Donald G. Morrison

1965 "Bias in multiple discriminant analysis." Journal of Marketing Research 2:250–58.

Katz, Elihu

1973 "Platforms and windows: broadcasting's role in election campaigns." Journalism Quarterly 48:304–14.

Katz, Elihu, and Jacob Feldman

1962 "The debates in the light of research." In Sidney Kraus (ed.), The Great Debates. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Lazarsfeld, Paul, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet

1944 The People's Choice. New York: Columbia University Press.

McCombs, Maxwell

1972 "Mass communication in political campaigns: information, gratification, and persuasion." In F. Gerald Kline and Phillip J. Tichenor (eds.), Current Perspectives in Mass Communication Research. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Morrison, Donald G.

1969 "Interpretation of discriminant analysis." Journal of Marketing Research 4:156–63.

1974 "Discriminant analysis." In Robert Ferber (ed.), Handbook of Marketing Research. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Nie, Norman H., Sidney Verba, and John R. Petrocik

1976 The Changing American Voter. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

O'Keefe, Garrett

1975 "Political campaigns and mass communications research." In Steven Chaffee (ed.), Political Communication. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Pool, Ithiel de Sola

1963 "The effect of communication on voting behavior." In Wilbur Schramm (ed.), The Science of Human Communication. New York: Basic Books.

Ray, Michael

1973 "Marketing communication and the hierarchy-of-effects." In Peter Clarke (ed.), New Models for Communication Research. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Sears, David O., and Steven H. Chaffee

1979 "Uses and effects of the debates." In Sidney Kraus (ed.), The Great Debates, 1976: Ford vs. Carter. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Tatsuoka, Maurice M.

1971 Multivariate Analysis: Techniques for Educational and Psychological Research. New York: Wiley.

Troldahl, Verling C., and Robert Van Dam

1965 "Face-to-face communication about major topics in the news." Public Opinion Quarterly 29:626–34.

The Polls:
Changing Attitudes Toward Euthanasia

JOHN M. OSTHEIMER

EUTHANASIA, long a dilemma of medical ethics, has quietly been taking on new significance over the past decade. Developments in medical technology have contributed to a growing number of situations that suggest the euthanasia alternative: individuals who a few years ago would have died can now be sustained beyond the point which even they themselves would desire.

The "politics" of euthanasia has been developing apace. The Euthanasia Society, recently renamed Concern for Dying, grew rapidly during the 1970s. Although it has no membership as such, its growth can perhaps be measured by its mailing list, which expanded from 10,000 in 1967 to 160,000 by August 1979.[1] The second major national organization, the Euthanasia Educational Council, grew from 600 members to 30,000 from 1969 to 1974, according to the New York *Times* (July 21, 1974).

Congressional hearings on "death with dignity" have been published.[2] Most significant, some relevant laws have been enacted.[3] Although these actions have occurred only at the state level, it is worth remembering that abortion liberalization also began that way. The development of a "politics of euthanasia" probably stands about where abortion did in the early 1960s, the plights of Karen Ann Quinlan and others serving as issue stimulants just as the thalidomide and rubella tragedies did during the years that led up to abortion liberalization.

Poll questions on euthanasia have varied between "passive" and "active" situations. These terms distinguish between merely allowing a person to die a more natural death by not using "heroic" measures of life support or resuscitation (passive), and actually taking some step such as injecting air or administering some chemical to a terminal patient in order to hasten death

---

[1] Personal communication with Concern for Dying.

[2] U.S. Senate, Special Committee on Aging, "Death with Dignity," 1972.

[3] See Robert M. Veatch, *Death, Dying and the Biological Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

John M. Ostheimer is Associate Professor of Political Science, Northern Arizona University.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University
Published by Elsevier North Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/80/0044-123/$1.75

(active). Comparison of the two Harris questions suggests that passive euthanasia, the first alternative offered respondents, is more acceptable to the public.

The present state of euthanasia polls suggests several methodological problems. First, questions asked on polls are not appropriate for the types of controversial situations that have so far dominated the issue. Except for the Texas poll, the available data deal only with situations in which the dying person's wishes have been clearly stated, whereas most publicized cases have involved incompetent patients such as accident, stroke, or overdose victims, deformed infants, or unconscious terminal illness sufferers. We do not know very much about the public's views in such situations.

The wording of available poll questions also leaves much to be desired. The base question of the Gallup-NORC poll is ambiguous. What does it mean to "end the patient's life by some painless means"? Our understanding of public attitudes is weakened by the imprecision inherent in the question, and attention should be given to clarifying the hypothetical situations posited. Questions should be worded so as not to precondition a negative response. For example, the low support for the Harris 2 question may derive partly from its wording: to be "put out of one's misery" is somewhat reminiscent of shooting one's trusty horse.

The "base question" for euthanasia attitudes, Gallup-NORC, now covers a 30-year period. Its results indicate a growing acceptance of the idea of euthanasia over that time. Acceptance has grown among all major population subgroups, but change has been greatest among Catholics and the younger age groups.

The data show a general absence of significant sex differences, although, on a related issue, a 1975 Institute of Life Insurance poll showed that women think about death more than men do.[4] The Texas poll shows some tendency for men to be slightly more tolerant of passive euthanasia.

Hostility to the idea of euthanasia is obviously greater among older respondents. However, in the California 1 poll a large number of "qualified" or "don't know" answers among the oldest group may indicate that although the elderly are comparatively hostile to euthanasia, the contemporary debate, particularly intense in California where one of the first Right to Die laws was enacted, may be causing reconsideration.

Socioeconomic variables show largely predictable subgroup differences. Those with more education tend to have more "liberal" attitudes on euthanasia. Although other demographic variables, such as income, occupation, and region also show correlations with euthanasia attitudes, the nature of the issue leads to the hypothesis that age, religion, and educational differences are responsible for these other relationships.

Finally, the NORC and Ohio results show race to be important. Racial differences on most political issues are usually dismissed as merely a function of the fact that nonwhites are less educated and more fundamentalist. A 1975 Gallup poll on suicide by those with terminal medical conditions also showed strong racial differences, but the 1973 Gallup euthanasia poll did not.

The polls mentioned are reported here with the permission of the following research organizations:

---

[4] See *Current Opinion* IV, 5 (May 1976):47.

California	Field Research Corp., and *Current Opinion*
Gallup: 1930s	*G.H. Gallup, The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935–1971*
Gallup	*Gallup Poll, Princeton, N.J.,* and *Gallup Opinion Index*
Harris	The Harris Poll, and *Current Opinion*
IOLI	Institute of Life Insurance, & *Current Opinion*
NORC	National Opinion Research Center
Ohio	The Ohio Poll and *Current Opinion*
Texas	The Texas Poll, and *Current Opinion*

HARRIS

1. All doctors take an oath saying they will maintain, restore, and prolong human life in their treatment of patients. It is now argued by some people that in many cases people with terminal diseases (those which can only end in death) have their lives prolonged unnecessarily, making them endure much pain and suffering for no real reason. Do you think a patient with a terminal disease ought to be able to tell his doctor to let him die rather than to extend his life when no cure is in sight, or do you think this is wrong? . . . .

	Ought to Be Allowed	*It Is Wrong*	*Not Sure*
1973 National total	62	28	10

2. Do you think the patient who is terminally ill, with no cure in sight, ought to have the right to tell his doctor to put him out of his misery, or do you think this is wrong?

	Ought to Be Allowed	*It is Wrong*	*Not Sure*
1973 National total	37	53	10

GALLUP

Do you favor mercy deaths under government supervision for hopeless invalids?

	Yes	*No*
Nov. 1936: National total	46	54
Sex		
Males		
Females	48	52
Age		
21–24	54	46
Region		
New England	43	57
Middle Atlantic	54	46
East Central	40	60
West Central	32	68
South	38	62
Mountain	63	37
Pacific	64	36
Jan. 1939: National total	46	54
Sex		
Males	49	51
Females	42	58
Age		
21–29	52	48
30–49	44	56
50+	41	59

GALLUP-NORC BASE QUESTION

When a person has a disease that cannot be cured, do you think doctors should be allowed to end the patient's life by some painless means if the patient and his family request it? (Percentage in agreement)

	GALLUP 1947	*GALLUP 1950*	*GALLUP 1973*	*IOLI 1975*	*NORC 1977*
National total	36	36	53	52	62
Sex					
Males		38			67
Females		34			58
Age					
18–49	(18–49) 39	(21–29) 39	(18–24) 68	(18–34) 60	(18–24) 68
50+	(50+) 31	(30–49) 37	(25–29) 65	(35–54) 45	(25–29) 65
		(50+) 30	(30–49) 51	(55+) 49	(30–49) 51
			(50+) 44		(50+) 44
Religion					
Protestant	36		53		60
Catholic	28		48		63
Jewish	54		60		76
					(no religion) 82

CALIFORNIA

1. Should an incurably ill patient have the right to ask for and get medication that would painlessly end his or her life?

	Should	*Should Not*	*Qualified Don't Know*
1975 statewide total	63	29	8
Sex			
Men	67	29	4
Women	60	30	10
Age			
18–24	70	25	5
25–34	76	19	5
35–49	62	36	2
50–69	57	31	12
70+	41	36	23
Religion			
Catholics	49	43	8
Non-Catholics	67	25	8

2. Should an incurably ill patient have the right to refuse medication that would painlesssly end his or her life?

	Should	*Should Not*	*Qualified Don't Know*
1975 statewide total	87	10	3
Sex			
Men	84	12	4
Women	89	9	2
Age			
18–24	91	6	3
25–34	94	4	2
35–49	83	13	4
50–69	84	12	4
70+	82	16	2
Religion			
Catholics	77	15	8
Non-Catholics	90	8	2

OHIO

Do you favor or oppose authorizing a doctor, by law, to painlessly end the life of a patient who is terminally ill, if the patient and his family request it?

	Favor	*Oppose*	*Don't Know*
1974 statewide total	44	41	15
Male	44	40	16
Female	44	42	14
Age groups			
18–30	52	39	9
31–45	48	38	14
46–64	43	43	14
65+	41	39	20
Religion			
Protestant	48	37	15
Catholic	34	50	16
Jewish	76	16	8
Race			
white	45	40	15
black	37	48	15
Income			
under $15,000	42	44	14
over $15,000	54	35	11

TEXAS

Some persons who are gravely ill, with no chance of recovery, are kept alive by life support machines. Do you think the immediate relatives of these persons should or should not have the right to decide if these machines should be turned off? (*Percentage in favor of giving relatives the right*)

1976 statewide total	63
Sex	
Male	67
Female	59
Age	
18–24	69
25–34	64
35–49	62
50–64	60
65+	62
Religion	
Protestant	64
Catholic	61
Other	61

GALLUP, NORC BASE QUESTION: FURTHER BREAKDOWN

When a person has a disease that cannot be cured, do you think doctors should be allowed to end the patient's life by some painless means if the patient and his family request it? (Percentage in agreement)

	Gallup 1973	*NORC 1977*	*NORC 1978*
National total	53	62	60
Race			
White	54	65	62
Nonwhite	53	(blacks) 39	45
Education			
Some college	61	70	69
High school	54	64	62
Grade school	39	57	41
Occupation			
Professional and business	58		
White collar	63		
Farmers	42		
Manual workers	52		
Religion			
Catholic	48	63	59
Atheist/Agnostic		82	81
Jewish	60	76	75
Protestant	53	60	58
Baptist		55	54
Methodist		67	63
Lutheran		63	71
Presbyterian		71	67
Episcopalian		68	73
Politics			
Republican	50		59
Democrat	49		60
Independent	49		63
Ideology			
Liberal		70	66
Slightly liberal		62	67
Moderate		66	60
Slightly conservative		61	61
Conservative		56	51
Region			
East	51		
Midwest	51		
South	48		
West	64		
Income			
$15,000 and over	60	67	64
$10,000–14,999	54	64	62
$7,000–9,999	48	60	62
$5,000–6,999	55	63	55
$3,000–4,999	46	51	51
Under $3,000	45	58	61
Community size			
1 million people plus	52	68	
50,000–999,999	55	62	
2,500–49,999	53	63	
Under 2,500	48	58	

A 0610-1

POPQAE 44(2) 143–286 (1980)
ISSN 0033-362X

Public Opinion Quarterly

Authority Systems *James S. Coleman*

America's Most Important Problem—A Trend Analysis, 1946–1976 *Tom W. Smith*

The Social Bases of Environmental Concern: A Review of Hypotheses, Explanations and Empirical Evidence *Kent D. Van Liere and Riley E. Dunlap*

Pseudo-Opinions on Public Affairs *George F. Bishop, Robert W. Oldendick, Alfred J. Tuchfarber and Stephen E. Bennett*

Response Styles in Telephone and Household Interviewing: A Field Experiment *Lawrence A. Jordan, Alfred C. Marcus and Leo G. Reeder*

Refusals: Who, Where and Why *Theresa J. DeMaio*

THE POLLS: Changing Attitudes and Policies Toward China *Connie de Boer*

CURRENT RESEARCH • NEWS AND NOTES

BOOK REVIEWS

SUMMER 1980

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

The Public Opinion Quarterly

ORGAN OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH
EDITORIALLY SPONSORED BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION

Allen Barton W. Phillips Davison Harvey C. Mansfield
Robert K. Merton Frederick T. C. Yu

Editor: Eleanor Singer *Managing Editor:* Ina C. Jaeger
Department Editors: *Editorial Assistants:*
Philip A. Harding, *News and Notes* Laura Valenstein
Marc B. Glassman, *Book Reviews* Nancy Jalet

EDITORIAL BOARD

Leo Bogart
Steven R. Brown
Robert O. Carlson
Steven H. Chaffee
Steven M. Cohen
Philip E. Converse
James A. Davis
Martin R. Frankel
Herbert J. Gans
Norval D. Glenn
John Hammond
Eugene L. Hartley
Mathew Hauck
Herbert H. Hyman
Elihu Katz
Joseph T. Klapper
Herbert E. Krugman
Everett Ladd
Kenneth C. Land
Gladys Engel Lang
Nathan Maccoby
Herbert McClosky
William J. McGuire
John P. Robinson
Howard Schuman
Seymour Sudman
Carol H. Weiss
Charles R. Wright

June Christ, *AAPOR Representative*

Volume #44, 4 issues (1980)

© 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University. Published quarterly by Elsevier North Holland, Inc. New York. Second-class postage paid at New York, New York and at additional mailing offices. Institutional subscription price per year $25.00 (Volume #44, 1980). Individual subscription for subscriber's own personal use $13.00 (payment must accompany order). Foreign subscribers must add an additional $4.00 per volume for postage (surface mail) and handling, $10.00 for air mail to Europe and Canada, $16.00 for air mail outside the U.S., Canada, or Europe.

Mail orders and direct subscription information to:
Michael Torzewski
Subscription Department
Elsevier North Holland, Inc.
52 Vanderbilt Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Single copy and back volume information furnished upon written request. Claims for missing issues can be honored only up to three months from date of issue. Indexed by Public Affairs Information Services, Social Sciences Index, United States Political Science Documents, and Combined Retrospective Index Sets (CRIS).

PUBLICATION NUMBER 449380

Editorial Office: Journalism Building, Columbia University 116th Street and Broadway, New York, New York 10027
Business, Subscriptions, Back Issues: Elsevier North Holland, Inc. 52 Vanderbilt Avenue New York, New York 10017
AAPOR: Post Office Box 17, Princeton, New Jersey 08540
Subscribers and members of AAPOR are urged to notify the Subscription Office as soon as possible of changes of address. In doing so, give the old as well as the new address.

PUBLISHED BY ELSEVIER NORTH HOLLAND, INC.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

The Public Opinion Quarterly

VOLUME 44 SUMMER 1980 NUMBER 2

Authority Systems *James S. Coleman* 143

America's Most Important Problem—A Trend Analysis, 1946–1976 *Tom W. Smith* 164

The Social Bases of Environmental Concern: A Review of Hypotheses, Explanations and Empirical Evidence *Kent D. Van Liere and Riley E. Dunlap* 181

Pseudo-Opinions on Public Affairs *George F. Bishop, Robert W. Oldendick, Alfred J. Tuchfarber and Stephen E. Bennett* 198

Response Styles in Telephone and Household Interviewing: A Field Experiment *Lawrence A. Jordan, Alfred C. Marcus and Leo G. Reeder* 210

Refusals: Who, Where and Why *Theresa J. DeMaio* 223

CURRENT RESEARCH

Encore! The Forgetful Voter *David Adamany and Mack C. Shelley II* 234

Mass Media Use, Issue Knowledge and Political Involvement *Alexis S. Tan* 241

Subjective Political Efficacy as a Measure of Diffuse Support *Shanto Iyengar* 249

Using Practice Interviews to Predict Interviewer Behaviors *Edward Blair* 257

NEWS AND NOTES *Philip A. Harding* 261

THE POLLS: Changing Attitudes and Policies Toward China *Connie de Boer* 267

IN MEMORIAM: Bernard Berelson, 1912–1979 *David L. Sills* 274

BOOK REVIEWS

Critiques and Celebrations of the Newsmaking Process: An Expository Review Herbert J. Gans, *Deciding What's News: A Study of the CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time*
David Halberstam, *The Powers That Be*
Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers*
Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* *Albert E. Gollin* 276

◆

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

Authors should submit two copies of their articles and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope if they wish them returned. Bibliographic references, footnotes, and tables should be typed to conform to the printed style of this journal. Authors are urged to consult recent issues before submitting articles.

Upon acceptance of an article by the journal, the author(s) will be asked to transfer copyright in the article to the publisher. This transfer will insure the widest possible dissemination of information under the U.S. Copyright Law.

The PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY is hospitable to all points of view, provided that the material presented will help to illuminate problems of communication and public opinion. The American Association for Public Opinion Research assumes responsibility only for material signed by an officer of the Association in his official capacity. Statements of fact and opinion are made on the responsibility of the authors alone and do not represent the views of the editors.

The PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY has been registered with the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc. Consent is given for copying of articles for personal or internal use, or for the personal or internal use of specific clients. This consent is given on the condition that the copier pay through the Center the per-copy fee stated in the code on the first page of each article for copying beyond that permitted by the U.S. Copyright Law. If no code appears on an article, the author has not given broad consent to copy and permission to copy must be obtained directly from the author. All articles published prior to 1978 may be copied for a per-copy fee of $1.00, also payable through the Center. This consent does not extend to other kinds of copying, such as for general distribution, resale, advertising and promotional purposes, or for creating new collective works.

America's Most Important Problem— A Trend Analysis, 1946–1976

TOM W. SMITH

THE PROVERB "if you want to understand a man, understand his problems" rings as true for a nation as it does for an individual. The areas that the public worries about tell a great deal about how society perceives and interprets a given historical moment. Moreover, by analyzing the problem priorities of subpopulations it is possible to investigate how different socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds affect the evaluation and ranking of problems. Likewise, by examining changes in the cluster of problems over time we can chart the flow of history from the perspective of the participants in the ongoing process. In sum, studying the problem profile of a society and its important components provides significant insights into the working of society, and following trends over time gives an important measure of social change.

To gauge America's problems one can turn to a large body of survey data. Indeed, the public has been asked to share its troubles with Gallup pollsters nearly 200 times since World War II.[1] After

[1] Gallup asked the most important problem question as early as November 1935. Known data points and available marginals before 1945 are scarce and sketchy, however. Since the starting point of a fairly continuous series of data points coincides with the end of World War II, it was decided to restrict analysis to the postwar period. Similar questions have also been used by Harris, Roper, the National Opinion Research Center, and the Survey Research Center, but they are not included in this analysis.

Abstract Using an extremely rich data series, this paper traces trends in America's most important problem from 1946 to 1976. Both long-term and short-term changes in public concern are charted. Additionally, the problem profiles of major sociodemographic groups are analyzed. Changes in the problem concerns of these groups are also followed across time.

Tom W. Smith is an Associate Study Director at the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago. This article is a revised version of a paper presented at the 34th Annual AAPOR Conference, Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania, June 1979.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University
Published by Elsevier North Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/80/0044-164/$1.75

excluding unavailable studies and variant question wordings, there remain 125 surveys from 1946 to 1976 with usable marginals.[2] The standard usage asks, "What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?" (See the Appendix for the variations and occurrences.) The frame of reference is the country at large, and responses inevitably deal with national or even global concerns rather than local or personal problems. The question also elicits a relative ranking of problems, not an absolute measurement of the level of anxiety in general. All problems compete for the public's attention, and the selection of one concern as most important necessitates the rejection of all others. Over time, it is impossible to determine if people are more or less worried in *toto* or whether they have absolutely a greater or smaller amount of concern about a particular issue. The changing priority assigned to problems can, however, be charted. Thus, the relative rating of national problems can be followed for the entire postwar period.[3]

Given the historical depth, frequency, saliency, and topicality of the most-important-problem (MIP) data, it is surprising that they have received only limited use. There has been little attempt to chart secular trends or short-term shifts in opinion, and little interest has been shown in the pattern of concern exhibited by major sociodemographic subgroups in society. The MIP data have most commonly been used to measure the public agenda in the agenda-setting literature (e.g. McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Eyal, et al., forthcoming; Winter, 1979; Funkhouser, 1973b; Palmgreen and Clarke, 1977; and Williams and Larsen, 1977). A second common application has been to relate time trends on one topic to related events or other survey results (e.g. Almond, 1950; Burstein, 1979; and Hibbs, 1978). Only occasionally have the data been used in a historical perspective to follow general trends for extended periods (Bennett and Tuchfarber, 1975; Nie et al., 1976; and Ladd, 1978) or to examine subgroups (Hibbs, 1976; and Douglas et al., 1974).

---

[2] Among the excluded versions were those that limited responses to a set of announced choices, those that focused on the family, the local community, or some other restricted area, and those that referred to the United States Congress.

[3] Two technical features of the most-important-problem question need to be dealt with—the matters of multiple responses and of response categories. In 106 of the 125 surveys multiple responses were permitted, in 13 only single answers were allowed, and in 2 instances the status is uncertain. The ratio of responses to respondents ranges from 1.01 to 1.35. To handle the multiple responses a new SPSS program, MULT RESPONSE, was employed. This program treats the responses rather than the respondents as the unit of analysis and thereby solves the problem of the extra responses. The second matter that had to be dealt with was the large number of response categories on any particular survey (up to 35) and the even greater number (over 100) that appears among surveys. To make the data analytically manageable and comparable, responses were grouped into four broad categories—foreign affairs, domestic issues, unclassifiable items, and don't knows. Foreign affairs (including war fears, military preparedness, and space) was subdivided into Vietnam-related and other. Domestic issues were partitioned into economic (inflation, unemployment, labor, etc.), social control (crime, violence, moral decline, etc.), civil rights (excluding race riots), government (corruption, lack of leadership, inefficiency, etc.) miscellaneous, listed topics (e.g., education, slums, and environment), and unspecified others. Unclassifiable items consist of categories that could not be assigned to either the foreign or domestic sectors (most frequently the response "Communism"). These nine groups separated problems into substantively distinct areas that were comparable over time and of adequate size.

Checks were also made to see whether the marginals were influenced by such artifacts as (1) variations in question wording, (2) number of responses allowed, (3) coding categories, (4) context and placement, and (5) changes in sample design. Except where noted, none of these factors was found to have an important effect.

General Trends

Remarkable shifts have occurred in the ranking of problems over the last four decades.[4] At the end of World War II concerns dealing with reconversion to a peacetime economy, shortages, the termination of price controls, and lingering fears of a return of the Great Depression combined to make economics the dominant problem. As the Cold War heated up in 1947 and 1948, however, more and more attention shifted to foreign affairs. This trend was briefly broken in 1949, when the passing of the immediate postwar crises and the onset of America's first postwar recession swung concern back to economics. After this hiatus, foreign affairs generally dominated the picture from 1950 to 1963, ranking first in 43 of the 45 surveys and usually commanding a plurality of from 35 to 50 percent. During this period economics remained a strong and persistent second, briefly overtaking foreign affairs during the 1954 and 1958 recessions (and coming close during the 1960–61 recession). In 1963, however, the reign of foreign affairs was challenged by the explosive eruption of the civil rights movement. Civil rights ranked as the most important problem for most of the next two years until foreign affairs, boosted by the Vietnam War, regained dominance in 1965. From 1965 until 1970 the Vietnam issue and other international problems generally topped the problem lists. The single break occurred in August 1967, when that long hot summer of riots pushed social control to first place. Over the next two and a half years (1970–1973) the situation became very fluid. The 14 available data points show foreign affairs on top 6 times, social control 5 times, and economics 3 times. Finally, in 1973, economics emerged as the most important problem, and persists as such down to the present.

---

[4] Marginals for the 125 data points are available upon request from the author.

To fill out the outline sketched above, the more important categories—foreign affairs, Vietnam, economics, civil rights, social control, and government—will be examined individually. In the case of foreign affairs, much of the trend has already been described. As Figure 1 shows, international issues rise quickly in the confrontation-prone late forties (e.g., the fall of Central Europe and China, the Berlin blockade, the Truman Doctrine). After temporary slippage in 1949, and again in 1954 and 1958, foreign affairs entered its long era of dominance, reflecting strong, persistent, and stable public concern about war and external Communism despite the peaks and valleys occasioned by particular crises and events.[5] From 1963 to 1965, concern about foreign affairs sagged as the civil rights movement gained attention. By mid-1965, America's escalating involvement in Vietnam had returned foreign affairs as the majority choice. From then until the present, however, foreign affairs slid into a long secular decline, with concern falling about 5 percentage points a year until it virtually disappeared as a topic in 1974. (The notable deviations from this trend occurred in mid-1972, when the Vietnam War flared up with the North Vietnam offensive of March 30 and the United States mining of Hanoi in May, and in January 1973, after the Christmas bombing offensive.)

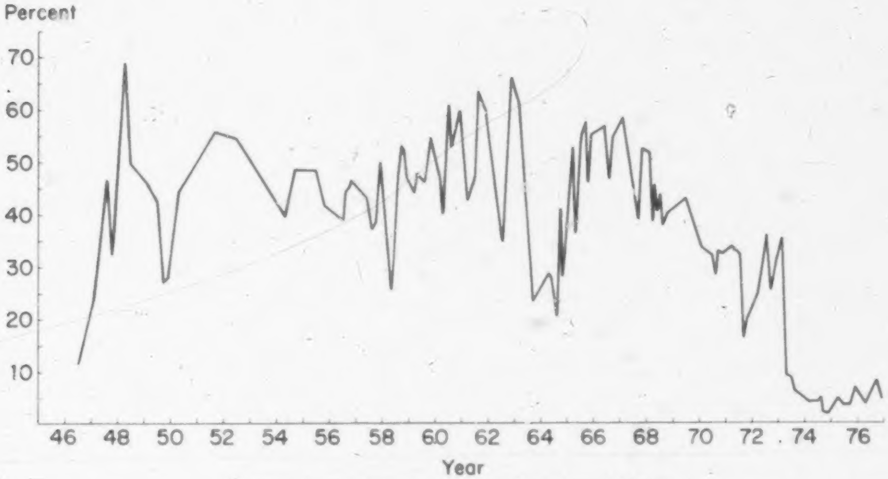

Figure 1. Percent Selecting Foreign Affairs

---

[5] This paper does not seek to explain the precise timing or magnitude of each shift, but focuses on long-term trends.

This decline is all the more remarkable when it is broken down into its Vietnam and other subcategories (Fig. 2). In 1964, just before the emergence of the war, about 35 percent chose international issues. With the recorded entry of Vietnam in May 1965, foreign affairs rose to 55 percent. Vietnam's share of the international sector increased until, from 1966 to 1969, it accounted for from 80 to 90 percent of the category.[6] After that point the Vietnam issue declined rapidly in 1969–1972, peaked and again dropped in 1972 and 1973, and then disappeared in mid-1973. What is striking is that no other foreign worry replaced Vietnam; with the end of the Vietnam troubles, the public apparently ceased to consider foreign problems "most" important.

Turning to the changes in economic problems, one is immediately struck by the basic U-shaped trend (Fig. 3). Economics predominated immediately after the close of World War II, when a host of economic problems beset the land (shortages, double-digit inflation, depression fears, and a nationwide labor strike). From then until the mid-sixties economic fears declined, though on the short term moving with the business cycle (showing peaks during the recessions of 1949, 1954, 1958, and 1960/61). From 1964 through 1969 economic concerns remained at a low ebb. Then, in 1970, pocketbook problems began to shoot up sharply along with the consumer price index until, by the fall of 1974, three-quarters of the public cited inflation and other economic troubles as the most important problem. Since then concern

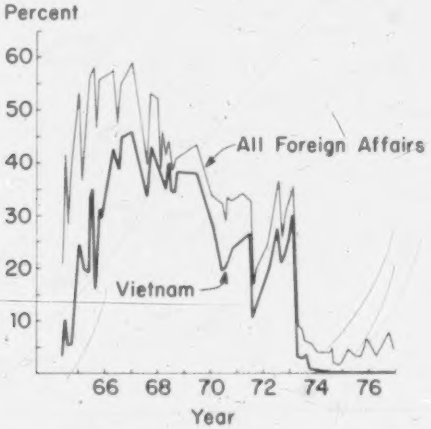

Figure 2. Percent Selecting Foreign Affairs and Vietnam, 1964–76

---

[6] Published marginals for AIPO 761 and 764 show all foreign responses referring to Vietnam. This results from the inclusion of the few non-Vietnam references with Vietnam.

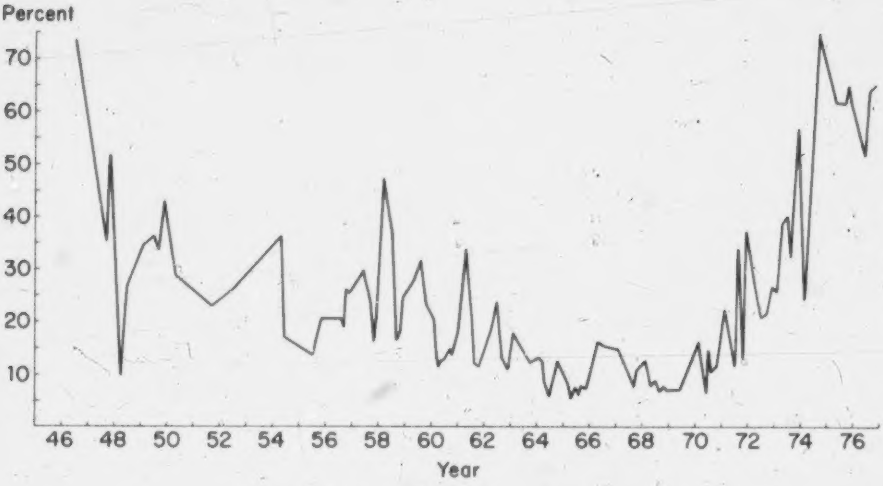

Figure 3. Percent Selecting Economics

has again waned, a trend that was not interrupted by the 1975 recession. In general, the level of economic concern as indicated by the MIP question appears to be highly correlated with both objective indicators (the consumer price index, indices of manufacturing production) and subjective indicators (ISR's consumer sentiment index). For example, the serial correlation of the percentage choosing economic problems and the consumer sentiment index from 1952 to 1975 was −.661 (i.e., consumer optimism correlates with low economic concern). Since the matched data points were often several months apart and since MIP is a relative measure while CSI is not, the strong association is striking.

Overall, inflation has been the economic problem cited most often. Across 94 studies for which detailed breakdowns were possible, an average of .595 chose inflation (including high taxes), .283 selected unemployment (including automation, recession, and employment opportunities), and .122 selected other economic problems (e.g., labor unions and strikes, farming, foreign trade, shortages, and reconversion after World War II). This distribution of economic problems was not stable across time, however. Figure 4 shows what proportion of all economic responses mentioned inflation. Low points occurred in 1949, 1954, 1958, and 1961, during postwar recessions, and similar drops appeared during the 1970–71 slowdown and the 1975 recession. Peaks appeared in 1966 and 1974. The 1966 point in part reflects the beginning of the 1966–1975 inflationary spiral, but in part appears to reflect the relative absence of unemployment and other economic problems at that time. The 1974 crest, on the other hand, probably

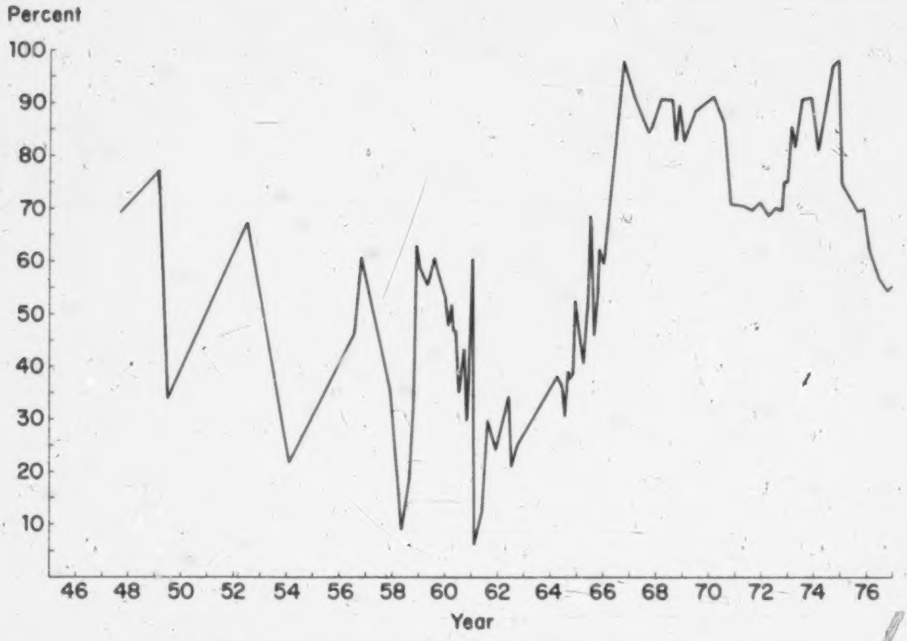

Figure 4. Percent Selecting Inflation Among Economic Problems

reflects the double-digit inflation that crested that year rather than the absence of other economic concerns. The secular trend, once the large cyclical swings are set aside, was for inflation to decline as the prime economic problem from the late 1940s to 1961 (note that each trough hits bottom at a lower level) and for it to rise as an economic concern from 1961 to the mid-1970s. Since then it has been fluctuating at a high level.

The next topic, civil rights, was virtually unrecognized as a problem area until 1956, when the civil rights movement was born with the Montgomery bus boycott (Fig. 5). Concern rose quickly until it

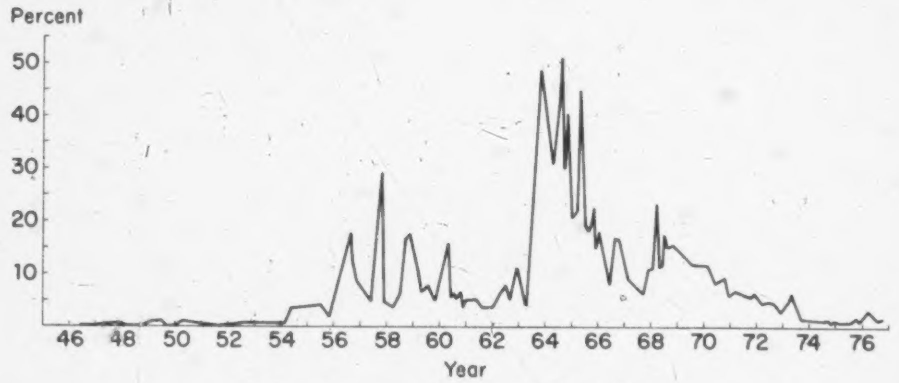

Figure 5. Percent Selecting Civil Rights

peaked in the fall of 1957, during the Little Rock school desegregation battle. Smaller peaks occurred during the renewed Arkansas and Virginia school desegregation fights in the fall of 1959 and the lunch counter sit-ins in the spring of 1960. Worry then subsided rapidly until, from mid-1960 to early 1963, it rested at pre-Montgomery levels. A second takeoff occurred in the fall of 1963 following a summer of intensified civil rights activity capped by Martin Luther King's "I have a dream . . ." speech at the Washington Monument in August. From then through early 1965, civil rights remained at or near the top of the problem list. Pushed aside by Vietnam and other problems, civil rights concern fell to less than half its peak level during 1965–1969. After that point, civil rights once again practically disappeared as a matter of "most important" concern.

Social control barely made the problem list in the late forties (Fig. 6). Then fears about Communist subversion reached a peak in the spring of 1954, during the celebrated Army-McCarthy hearings. With the disappearance of concern over the Red Peril, the social control problem was reduced to a small level of worry about juvenile delinquency and other criminal matters. This situation continued until 1965–1966, when a mixture of fear of crime, moral decline, and violence began to push the level of concern upwards. This swell was changed into a torrent by the race riots of 1967.[7] Concern moderated in 1968–69 with the subsidence of race riots, then climbed to another peak in the fall of 1970, following a spring and summer of campus and race riots, the escalation of violence

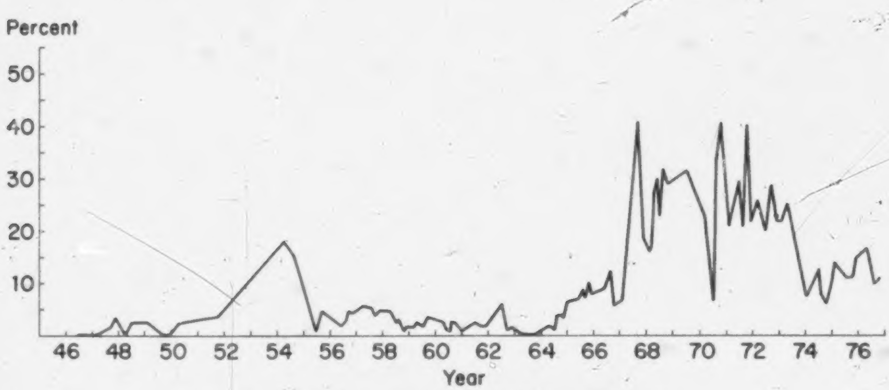

Figure 6. Percent Selecting Social Control

---

[7] By the Kerner Commission's count there were 8 major and 33 serious riots in the first nine months of 1967.

as a political issue, and the issuance of the Scranton report.[8] With the decline of campus trouble, the social control leveled off around the 20 percent level in 1971–1972.[9] The end of riots, violent political confrontations, and unrest in general contributed to the further decline of the social control issue in 1973–1974. Since then it has consisted largely of worry about crime, which remains well above levels of the 1960s.

The last problem area, government, has never ranked as the most important problem and, in fact, before 1973 was rarely judged a problem at all.[10] The problem, focusing on both corruption in government and a more generalized dissatisfaction and lack of trust in government, emerged with Watergate and reached its peak of 23 percent just before Nixon's resignation (Fig. 7). While this action ameliorated the problem, the government issue remains well above its pre-Watergate level.

Of all of the other miscellaneous problems selected over the three decades (including "Mosquitos," "There aren't enough men for us girls who aren't married," and "Minding their own business"), few ever captured a notable number of responses. Only in one instance did the "other" categories contain the plurality of responses. Energy, which first appeared as a problem in spring of 1973, averaged .021 in 1973 before shooting up to .342 in January 1974 during the Arab oil embargo. By May 1974, however, concern had fallen to .039, and from then until the end of 1976 averaged only .028.

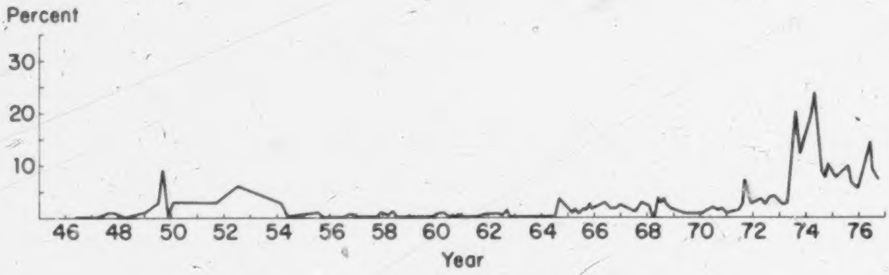

Figure 7. Percent Selecting Government

---

[8] The apparent drop in May 1970 results from a large number (.251) of undesignated responses.

[9] The peak in October 1971 results from the variant question wording. It appears to produce more violence-associated responses and includes a category, "hippies/younger generation," that was selected by 9 percent.

[10] Each of the three small prior rises in 1949, 1952, and 1971 appears largely tied to question format. The 1949 point specifies government in the question, the 1952 codes a lot of political references, and the 1971 wording produces different marginals from the standard wording on several categories.

Other miscellaneous responses also made up an unusually high level (.100+) of problems on 15 other surveys (AIPO 443, 699, 797, 807, 811, 824, 831, 836, 840, 844, 853, 855, 858, 859, and 864). AIPO 443 recorded a peak level of concern about the post-World War II housing shortage (.069), AIPO 811 recorded the high mark of worry about the environment and pollution (.087), and AIPO 699, 797, and 807 had no particular topical emphasis. From February 1971 to February 1973 there was a generally high level of concern about other topics. Ten of the 12 surveys during this period had levels over .100 and they averaged .121. The most frequently selected responses were social welfare concerns (poverty, welfare, medical care, slums, education, etc.), which accounted for about 7 percent of all responses, thereby usually ranking fourth below foreign affairs, social control, and economics and above government and civil rights. The second largest topic was the environment, which averaged just under 4 percent. Since the period 1970–1973 was marked by high fluidity in selection of the most important problem, the high proportion of "other" responses further marks these years as a period of instability, diffuse concerns, and perplexity.

Problems Among Sociodemographic Groups

Clearly, time has had dramatic impact on the problem priorities of the American public. The next question is whether socioeconomic, demographic, and other characteristics have a similar influence and how these background associations interact with time. To examine this matter, 26 data files were available from 1948 to 1976 (AIPO 415, 443, 454, 494, 528, 548, 570, 588, 604, 610, 616, 624, 641, 689, 714, 724, 728, 733, 735, 749, 773, 781, 831, 839, 853, 960 and NORC/SRS 330). While 26 data points hardly compare with 125 and two years are lost from the beginning of the time series, there remains nevertheless a rich and extensive body of data for analysis.

Inspection of the surveys showed that extensive time series analysis was possible for the following standard background variables: sex, age, race, region, community type, education, income, religion, and party identification. Since preliminary work indicated strong time interactions, the time series analysis was routinely conducted for the entire 28-year span, for years 1948–1961 and 1964–1976, and for other special time cuts.[11]

---

[11] The substantially different marginals indicate that these were distinct time periods. The decision to split the data in this way was reinforced by several technical matters. For example, the data points are split 13 to 13, and Vietnam falls entirely in the latter period.

To examine the relationship between time, the background variables, and the most important problem, *d*-systems were employed (Davis, 1975). The variables are cross-tabulated and differences in proportions between categories are calculated. *D*-system inspects the difference between demographic subgroups such as men vs. women on each of the most important problem categories and tests for its statistical significance. It also tests to determine whether the difference is constant over all data points or whether it interacts with time.

There are three possible outcomes for the test. If the observed differences are not statistically significant, then the model that there are no differences between the categories ($d = 0$) is accepted. If the observed differences are statistically significant, then the pooled difference over all time points is calculated. If the observed differences do not vary significantly from the pooled estimate, then the model that the differences are constant over time ($d = c$) is accepted. If the differences do vary significantly from the pooled estimate, then differences exist between the groups and their magnitude varies with time. This outcome is described as nonconstant. Turning to the data, we find that the comparisons between the background variables and the MIP can be summarized by the following generalizations.[12]

First, compared to the changes over time, the intercategorical differences are generally small. Of the 133 comparisons covering the entire 1948–1976 period, 67.7 percent showed no statistically significant differences, 6.8 percent showed constant differences, and 35.6 percent had more complex models. Not only were most differences insignificant, but even when significant the differences were generally small. The pooled differences on the constant and nonconstant differences averaged only 1.7 percentage points.

Second, the differences vary considerably from period to period and from survey to survey. Most of the significant differences (34 of 43) are nonconstant. A few of these are the product of one or two deviant points, and if these outliers are eliminated, $d = 0$ or $d = c$ models fit the data. In most cases, however, the nonconstant differences are the result of time interactions. Additionally, the time interactions are generally complex and a strict linear fit usually does not fully explain the changes with time. The three typical types of time interactions were period-to-period changes in associations, variations in associations with intensity of problem (i.e., a direct relationship between marginals and the intergroup differences), and party-in-power effects, where associations interacted with respondent's party affiliation and the party affiliation of the president.

---

[12] For a more detailed discussion of associations between the MIP and the background variables, see Smith, 1979.

Period-to-period effects occurred when a difference existed during one period but was absent or weaker during an earlier or later period. For example, during the 1950s women were less concerned than men about economics (*d* = −5.2 points), but during the later period the difference declined (*d* = −4.1). Likewise, the South was more worried about civil rights than the North during the early stages of the movement (*d* = 11.0, 1955–1961) than during its later stages (*d* = 1.8, 1963–1976). In these and similar instances we interpreted the change in subgroup differences as resulting either from changes in the perspective of the groups involved (e.g., the decrease of sex differences on economics as more women entered the labor force) or a redefinition of the problem (e.g., the "nationalization" of the civil rights problem as a countrywide and not particularly southern matter). The intensity-difference effect occurred when the magnitude of differences between groups varied with the intensity of the concern. For example, when civil rights heated up during the 1950s and 1960s, it raised the concern of blacks faster than of whites, and when the problem cooled and the marginals declined, black distress dropped more quickly than that of whites.[13] The party-in-power effect happened when differences were influenced by party affiliation of the respondent and of the president at the time. For example, on foreign affairs, Democrats showed higher concern under Truman (*d* = 3.7, borderline significance,) lower worry under Eisenhower (*d* = −6.0), and no difference under Kennedy/Johnson and Nixon/Ford. The association of high concern over foreign affairs with a person's own party holding the presidency was, however, continued during the Kennedy/Johnson administrations by the Democrats' higher ranking of Vietnam as a concern (*d* = 5.9). In brief, the impact of history and other periodic factors is so strong that not only are marginals shifted, but often differences between demographic subgroups are augmented or diminished, created or destroyed.

Third, looking at the overall pattern of differences, we find that while most are quite small and fluctuating, they are clearly related to the self-interest, socioeconomic roles, and subcultures of the groups. For example, blacks were more concerned about civil rights and less about foreign affairs. Women have been more worried about war[14] and less about economics. The young, middle, and old cohorts showed little difference, but the new cohort (born after 1939) has been less troubled by the economy and social control and more disturbed about Vietnam. These preferences seem to be the understandable inclinations of a cohort that emerged during post-World War II affluence, served as a prime target of social control efforts, and participated intimately in Vietnam.

---

[13] The marginals on civil rights and black-white differences correlated $r = .714$ during the 1947–1965 period. There is undoubtedly some artifact in this since larger marginals allow more room for subgroups to vary and the probability for wider differences increases.

[14] See also Mueller, 1973:146–47.

The South, as always, tended to stand out from other regions. It showed a greater concern over civil rights (during the early stage of the civil rights movement) and social control, and was less troubled by foreign affairs/Vietnam. Community type in general played no important role in ordering problem priorities. More education tended to be associated with greater concern about foreign affairs during the 1950s, but neither Vietnam nor foreign affairs was related to education later on. The better educated were less worried about economics and more interested in miscellaneous problems. There were no notable differences among income groups. Protestants were less concerned about foreign affairs/Vietnam and more troubled about civil rights and social control (since Catholics and Jews tend to be whites living outside the South). On party identification, Independents did not differ significantly from either Republicans or Democrats but the two major parties did differ on some problems, showing party-in-power effects on foreign affairs and economics.

In brief, while most intergroup differences were slight and many were variable across surveys, there were a number of significant, nontrivial, and somewhat stable differences among subgroups in their judgment of America's most important problem. Most of these differences could be plausibly accounted for by the association of the problem with the social position and life experiences of the various sociodemographic groups. What is surprising is that more equally plausible differences did not emerge (e.g., the poor showing of income).

Finally, there is some evidence of a homogenization of concerns over time. Looking at differences that are comparable over both time periods[15] we see that in 1948–1961, .729 were insignificant, .083 constant, and .183 nonconstant; and in 1963–1971, .823 were insignificant, .063 constant, and .115 nonconstant. The magnitude of the significant differences also decreased from 4.4 in the earlier period to 2.2 in the later period. This decline may simply result from the differing mixture of problems over the two periods. Perhaps the problems that predominated in the earlier period were related to more sociodemographic attributes than were those problems that appeared in the later period. Alternatively, the increase in homogenization may result from the centralization of information about problems. During these 30 years, fairly decentralized news media based on local newspapers and radio stations were in large part replaced by three New York-based news programs. If diverse groups are increasingly receiving a more homogeneous presentation and analysis of problems, the result may well be the erosion of intergroup differences. And beyond the possible immediate effect of news centralization, more general forces of homogenization may be at work.[16]

---

[15] Comparisons involving Vietnam, the new cohort, and income were all eliminated since they occur only in the second period.

To summarize, the MIP question documents not only the shifting concerns of post-World War II American society, but also the general ebb and flow of recent American history. There have been dramatic marginal shifts during the three decades since the close of World War II. Changes include both sudden leaps and plunges (e.g., the rise of civil rights) and long-term trends (e.g., the decline of foreign affairs since 1966). Whether short or long term, these fluctuations appear to be strongly associated with historical events. The MIP question also shows how major social groups perceived events. It indicates that on the whole the group differences tended to be small and trivial, but in certain combinations of circumstances (e.g., blacks and civil rights) notable differences appeared. The analysis of MIP differences among groups also revealed that these differences are not fixed, but vary considerably from period to period as circumstances have changed. As with the marginals themselves, intergroup differences were strongly influenced by the flow and intensity of events, reminding us that social profiles and associations are frequently history-bound conditionals rather than timeless universals.

Appendix: Question Wordings

	Question Wording	*Surveys*
A.	What do you think will be the most important problem during the next year?	AIPO354, 357
B.	In your opinion, what is the most important problem the United States government must solve in the next year?	AIPO387, 449

---

[16] See on the antimassification school Glenn, 1966; Glenn, 1967; Glenn and Simmons, 1967; Reed, 1972. Those finding homogenization include McKinney and Bourque, 1971; Bell, 1961; and Mayo, 1964.

C. What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?	AIPO 401, 404, 415, 420, 435, 443, 494, 528, 570, 571, 572, 573, 583, 588, 590, 593, 596, 601, 603, 604, 605, 606, 610, 612, 616, 618, 624, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 641, 644, 648, 653, 657, 660, 662, 663, 664, 669, 677, 688, 689, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 706, 708, 711, 714, 715, 717, 719, 720, 728, 733, 735, 740, 749, 753, 756, 761, 764, 765, 766, 767, 769, 770, 781, 797, 807, 811, 814, 815, 824, 831, 836, 840, 844, 853, 855, 858, 859, 862, 864, 870, 871, 877, 886, 906, 913, 915, 916, 924, 932, 938, 943, 950, 960, 961
D. What do you think is the most important problem before the American people today?	AIPO447
E. What do you think is the most important problem facing the entire country today?	AIPO454, 480
F. What do you regard as the biggest issue or problem facing the U.S. government today?	AIPO530
G. What do you regard as the biggest issue or problem, facing the government in Washington today?	AIPO548, 555
H. Turning to the next topic . . . what bothers or angers you the most about America today?	AIPO839
I. Of the many problems facing this country, which one gives you the greatest worry or concern at this time?	AIPO665
J. In your opinion, what is the most important problem the government must solve in the next few months?	AIPO366
K. What do you think will be the most important problem facing this country during the next six months?	AIPO374

References

Almond, Gabriel A.
1950 The American People and Foreign Policy. New York: Harcourt, Brace.

Bell, Daniel
1961 The End of Ideology. New York: Collier.
Bennett, Stephen Earl, and Alfred J. Tuchfarber
1975 "The social-structural sources of cleavage on law and order policies." American Journal of Political Science 19:419–38.
Burstein, Paul
1979 "Public opinion, demonstrations, and the passage of antidiscrimination legislation." Public Opinion Quarterly 43:157–72.
Davis, James A.
1975 "Analyzing contingency tables with linear flow graphs: *d* systems." Pp. 111–45 in David Heise (ed.), Sociological Methodology, 1976. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Devine, Donald J.
1972 The Political Culture of the United States: The Influence of Member Values on Regime Maintenance. Boston: Little, Brown.
Douglas, Elizabeth B., William P. Cleveland, and George L. Maddox
1974 "Political attitudes, age, and aging: a cohort analysis of archival data." Journal of Gerontology 29:666–75.
Eyal, Chiam, Jim Winter, and Maxwell McCombs
forthcoming "The agenda-setting role of mass communication." In Mass Communication: Concepts and Issues in the Mass Media.
Funkhouser, G. Ray.
1973a "The issues of the sixties: an exploratory study in the dynamics of public opinion." Public Opinion Quarterly 37:62–75.
1973b "Trends in media coverage of the issues of the 60's." Journalism Quarterly 533–38.
Glenn, Norval D.
1966 "The trend in differences in attitudes and behavior by educational level." Sociology of Education 39:255–75.
1967 "Massification versus differentiation: some trend data from national surveys." Social Forces 46:172–80.
Glenn, Norval D., and J. L. Simmons
1967 "Are regional differences diminishing?" Public Opinion Quarterly 31:176–93.
Hibbs, Douglas A., Jr.
1976 "Economic interest and the politics of macroeconomic policy." Unpublished paper, Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
1978 "The mass public and macroeconomic policy: the dynamics of public opinion toward unemployment and inflation." Unpublished paper, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford.
Ladd, Everett C.
1978 "The nation's most important problem." Public Opinion 1:30–32.
Margolis, Michael
1977 "From confusion to confusion: issues and the American voter (1956–1972)." American Political Science Review 71:31–43.
Mayo, Selz C.
1964 "Social change, social movements and the disappearing sectional South." Social Forces 43:1–10.

McCombs, Maxwell E., and Donald L. Shaw
1972 "The agenda-setting function of the mass media." Public Opinion Quarterly 36:176–87.

McKinney, John C., and Linda Brookover Bourque
1971 "The changing South: national incorporation of a region." American Sociological Review 36:399–412.

Mueller, John E.
1973 War, Presidents, and Public Opinion. New York: John Wiley.

Nie, Norman H., Sidney Verba, and John R. Petrocik
1976 The Changing American Voter. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Palmgreen, Philip, and Peter Clarke
1977 "Agenda-setting with local and national issues." Communication Research 4:435–52.

"Problémes Actuels de la Société Américaine Etats-Unis 1970–1971."
1977 Sondages 33, Nos. 3–4 (entire issue).

Reed, John Shelton
1972 The Enduring South: Subcultural Persistence in Mass Society. Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Health.

Smith, Tom W.
1979 "America's most important problem: a trend analysis, 1946–1976." Paper presented to the 34th annual AAPOR Conference, Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania, June 1979.

Williams, Wenmouth, Jr., and David C. Larsen
1977 "Agenda-setting in an off-election year." Journalism Quarterly 54:737–49.

Winter, James P.
1979 "An agenda-setting time frame for the civil rights issue, 1954–1976." Unpublished paper, Communications Research Center, Syracuse University.

The Social Bases of Environmental Concern: A Review of Hypotheses, Explanations and Empirical Evidence

KENT D. VAN LIERE AND RILEY E. DUNLAP

IN THE past decade social scientists have shown a great deal of interest in public attitudes toward environmental problems and issues, as reflected by the large number of studies of public concern with environmental quality (for a recent bibliography of such studies see Dunlap and Van Liere, 1978). Although several researchers have attempted to document changing levels of "environmental concern" among the public (Buttel and Flinn, 1974; Grossman and Potter, 1977b), the central issue addressed by researchers increasingly has been to determine the social bases of concern for environmental quality. Whether for theoretical reasons (Hornback, 1974) or because of potential policy implications (Dillman and Christenson, 1972), de-

---

Abstract This paper reports an evaluation of existing knowledge regarding the social bases of public concern with environmental quality. First, five popular hypotheses asserting relationships between environmental concern and eight demographic and social variables are reviewed, with particular attention paid to the theoretical explanations offered in support of each hypothesized relationship. Second, the results of 21 relevant studies are evaluated to determine the degree to which the empirical evidence supports the hypothesized relationships. Third, implications of the results of the review for future research are discussed.

Kent D. Van Liere is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Riley E. Dunlap is Associate Professor in the Departments of Sociology and Rural Sociology, Washington State University. This paper is a revised version of a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Sociological Society, Atlanta, 1979. The research reported herein was supported by Project 0158, Department of Rural Sociology, Washington State University, Pullman, Washington 99164, and this is scientific paper No. 5312, College of Agriculture Research Center, Washington State University. Thanks are extended to Donald Hastings, Thomas Hood, and Don Dillman for helpful comments on an earlier draft.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University
Published by Elsevier North Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/80/0044-181/$1.75

termining what types of people are most concerned about the environment has been a dominant theme.

Given the large number of studies (see Dunlap and Van Liere, 1978), one might expect that considerable progress has been made in identifying and explaining variation in public concern with environmental problems. Instead, one finds considerable dissensus with respect both to the evidence itself and its interpretation. The purpose of this paper is to take stock of existing knowledge and to determine more precisely what is known about the correlates of environmental concern.

Because of the reliance on sample survey techniques, the largest body of data on correlates of environmental concern exists for the social and demographic variables that are routinely included in such surveys—age, sex, income, education, occupational prestige, residence, political party, and political ideology. Thus, our review concentrates on the associations between these variables and various indicators of environmental concern.[1] We confine our attention to bivariate associations since most studies have not employed multivariate analyses.

The review is divided into two sections. First, we examine the common hypotheses and theoretical explanations relating environmental concern to social and demographic variables.[2] Second, we summarize the existing evidence to determine the degree to which it provides support for the hypothesized relationships.[3]

Review of Hypotheses and Explanations

In reviewing the literature, we examine five general hypotheses—the age, social class, residence, political, and sex hypotheses—as well as the theoretical explanation(s) offered for each of them.

The Age Hypothesis: Younger people tend to be more concerned about environmental quality than older people. Though initially there were suggestions that age is positively correlated with environmental concern (Harry et al., 1969), most studies of the general public have not supported this contention. Rather, the predominant finding has been that age is negatively correlated with environmental concern.

---

[1] We will not include a few standard demographic variables, such as race and religion, because very few studies have examined relationships between them and indicators of environmental concern.

[2] We are admittedly using "theoretical" in a rather loose sense, to refer to the explanation provided by an author as to why a hypothesized relationship should be found to exist. However, such conceptions of theories are common in the social sciences—see, e.g., Labovitz and Hagedorn, 1976:40–42.

[3] As will be seen below, the existing literature rarely allows one to determine which of two or more competing theoretical explanations for a given hypothesis is most plausible—even when the hypothesis itself is confirmed.

One explanation for the age hypothesis rests on what Malkis and Grasmick (1977) call age-group differences, or differences associated with the aging process which presumably can be outgrown. In particular, it has been argued that young people are less integrated into the American economic system or, more generally, the dominant social order (Malkis and Grasmick, 1977; Hornback, 1974). Since solutions to environmental problems often are viewed as threatening the existing social order, possibly requiring substantial changes in traditional values, habitual behaviors, and existing institutions (Hornback, 1974), it is logical to expect youth to support environmental reform and accept pro-environmental ideologies more readily than their elders.

Malkis and Grasmick also discuss cohort differences as an explanation for the negative age environmental concern relationship. In explaining cohort differences they draw on Mannheim's (1952) theory of generations, which suggests that important historical events occurring at the crucial adolescent and young adulthood phase of the life cycle can permanently affect a cohort throughout its existence. Malkis and Grasmick (1977:43–45) suggest that exposure of the current 18- to 30-year-olds to the "youth movement" of the sixties and seventies may help account for their greater concern about environmental problems. Specifically, they argue that the involvement of youth with environmental issues is a logical outgrowth of their high level of mobilization over the receding issues of civil rights and Vietnam. In addition, although Malkis and Grasmick do not mention it, Mannheim's theory would lead us to expect that continued exposure to alarming information on environmental deterioration (via the news media, environmental education courses, etc.) has left an indelible imprint on many young people during the past decade, forming an ecology-minded generation whose commitment to environmental reform should not disappear as they move into adulthood.

The Social Class Hypothesis: Environmental concern is positively associated with social class as indicated by education, income, and occupational prestige. One explanation for this hypothesis is that the upper and middle classes have solved their basic material needs and thus are free to focus on the more aesthetic aspects of human existence. This hypothesis rests on Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs theory, and assumes that concern for environmental quality is something of a luxury which can be indulged only after more basic material needs (adequate food, shelter, and economic security) are met (Dunlap et al., 1975).

Morrison et al. (1972) present a related argument, using the concept of relative deprivation. They argue that members of the lower class typically have experienced only poor physical conditions, and thus are less aware that they live, work, and play in polluted, overcrowded conditions. Conversely, the middle and upper classes are more likely to have experienced pleasant residential, work, and recreational environments, and consequently are more concerned about the deterioration of the physical environment. Thus, Morrison et al. (1972) suggest that it is "relative" deprivation, not "absolute" deprivation, which leads to environmental concern.

Finally, it is suggested that the middle and upper classes are the most politically and socially active segments of American society, and that their concern over environmental problems is only an extension of a generalized concern with social problems (Martinson and Wilkening, 1975; Althoff and Greig, 1977). As a result, it is not surprising that these advantaged classes are disproportionately concerned about environmental problems.

It has been argued that these positive forms of the social class hypothesis draw too heavily on studies of environmental organization memberships, and that these findings may not generalize to the mass public (Buttel and Flinn, 1978b; Grossman and Potter, 1977a). Buttel and Flinn (1978b) for example, argue that because the lower and working classes typically reside in highly polluted areas, work in poor physical environments, and have access to poor recreational facilities, they should be expected to express concern about poor environmental conditions. Thus, contrary to most writers, Buttel and Flinn hypothesize that the lower and working classes are as much or more concerned about environmental problems than the middle and upper classes.

The Residence Hypothesis: Urban residents are more likely to be environmentally concerned than rural residents. Tremblay and Dunlap (1978) discuss two possible explanations for this relationship: First, urban residents should be more concerned with environmental problems because they generally are exposed to higher levels of pollution and other types of environmental deterioration; this explanation assumes that place of residence is an indicator of objective physical conditions, and that exposure to poor environmental conditions leads to environmental concern. Second, rural residents are more likely than urbanites to have a utilitarian orientation toward the natural environment because of their involvement with "extractive" occupations such as farming, logging, and mining. Thus, heavy dependence on use of the natural environment by rural residents is assumed to result in less concern with environmental protection than that shown by urban residents (also see Harry et al., 1969). This explanation rests partially on occupational differences between rural and urban residents, with residence as a proxy variable for extractive—nonextractive occupations. Tremblay and Dunlap also argue that even rural residents not engaged in nature-extractive occupations can be expected to hold utilitarian attitudes toward the environment because of a shared rural culture.

Murdock and Schriner (1977) suggest a third explanation: Because small towns need to maintain economic growth to survive, they are assumed to value growth over protection of environmental quality. Thus, the growth orientation of rural and small-town residents, not the utilitarian orientation of farmers and other rural residents, presumably accounts for the positive relationship between environmental concern and size of place of residence.

The Political Hypothesis: Democrats and liberals are more concerned about environmental quality than are their Republican and conservative counterparts. The rapid rise of widespread public support for environmental reform in the late sixties and early seventies led to arguments that environmental concern transcended political cleavages (Ogden 1971). Recent studies, however, have questioned the consensus quality of environmental politics, arguing that support for environmental reform varies among political groupings (Buttel and Flinn, 1976; 1978a; Dunlap, 1975; Springer and Constantini, 1974).

Dunlap (1975:432) notes three reasons for expecting a split along traditional ideological and partisan lines: (1) environmental reforms generally are opposed by business and industry because of the costs involved, (2) environmental reforms entail an extension of government activities and regulations, and (3) environmental reforms often require innovative action. Noting traditional Republican-conservative favoritism toward business, opposition to big government, and suspicion of drastic change, Dunlap hypothesizes that there will be significant differences in environmental concern between Democrats and Republicans as well as between liberals and conservatives, in the direction noted above.

Buttel and Flinn (1976), in examining these relationships further, argue that political ideology is the key variable because the two-party system in this country tends to dilute partisan differences. They therefore suggest that political liberals tend to be more supportive of environmental protection than conservatives, as did Dunlap (1975), but that Democrats are no more likely to be environmentally concerned than Republicans.

The Sex Hypothesis: Relatively few researchers have paid attention to sex in studies of environmental concern. McEvoy (1972) argues that because males are more likely to be politically active, more involved with community issues, and have higher levels of education than females, they will be more concerned over environmental problems. Conversely, Passino and Lounsbury (1976) argue that males are more likely than females to be concerned about jobs and economic growth, and thus are less concerned than females with protecting environmental quality. Consequently, there is no agreement on the direction of the relationship between sex and environmental concern.

Review of the Evidence

We now turn to a review of the data that bear on the hypotheses discussed above. A number of criteria were employed in selecting studies to be included in Table 1. First, we limited our attention to

Table 1. A Summary of the Bivariate Relationships between Indicators of Environmental Concern and Age, Education, Income, Occupational Prestige, Residence, Sex, Political Party, and Political Ideology Reported in Existing Studies

Study	*Age*	*Educ.*	*Inc.*	*Occ.*	*Res.*[a]	*Sex*[b]	*Party*[c]	*Ideol.*[d]
Studies Reporting Pearson's *r*								
Arbuthnot & Lingg, 1975								
Recycling index	−.05	.29	—	—	—	−.11	—	—
Env. future orientation	−.18	.45	—	—	—	−.07	—	—
Buttel & Flinn, 1976								
Awareness of env. probs.	−.33	.20	—	—	.28	—	.06	.10
Support for env. reforms	−.30	.23	—	—	.14	—	.08	.23
Buttel & Johnson, 1977								
Ameliorative dimension	—	.08	—	—	—	—	.14	.35 .34
Redirective dimension	—	.26	—	—	—	—	−.01	.25 −.03
Grossman & Potter, 1977b								
Env. concern (1973)	−.24	.17	.09	.05	−.09	.01	.10	NA[e]
Env. concern (1974)	−.26	.17	.06	.07	.17	−.01	.08	.15
Env. concern (1975)	−.21	.09	.04	.02	.11	.09	.09	.15
Env. concern (1976)	−.23	.16	.14	.04	.12	.02	.03	.12
Koenig, 1975								
Env. concern index	NR[f]	NR[f]	NR[f]	NR[f]	—	—	.15	—
Martinson & Wilkening, 1975								
Awareness of env. probs.	−.41	.33	—	—	—	—	—	—
Malkis & Grasmick, 1977								
Env. ideol.-production	−.32	.16	−.21	.13	—	—	—	—
Env. ideol.-consumption	−.26	.07	−.17	.03	—	—	—	—
Springer & Constantini, 1974								
Env. concern	−.17	.12	.05	—	.08	—	NR[f]	.01[g]
Tognacci et al., 1972								
Import. of pure env.	−.09	.06	—	—	—	—	.1[h]	.1[h]
Attainment of pure env.	−.27	.17	—	—	—	—	.01[h]	.05[h]
Conservation scale	−.34	.37	—	—	—	—	.001[h]	.001[h]
Pollution scale	−.41	.35	—	—	—	—	.001[h]	.001[h]
Power plant scale	−.33	.28	—	—	—	—	.001[h]	.001[h]
Overpopulation scale	−.38	.30	—	—	—	—	.001[h]	.001[h]
Pop. control scale	−.44	.24	—	—	—	—	.01[h]	.001[h]

Table 1. (Continued)

Study	*Age*	*Educ.*	*Inc.*	*Occ.*	*Res.*[a]	*Sex*[b]	*Party*[c]	*Ideol.*[d]
Van Liere & Dunlap, 1978								
Population scale	−.04	.11	.02	−.04	.10	−.02	−.04	.12
Pollution scale	−.25	.18	−.03	.12	.04	.15	.03	.19
Resource cons. scale	−.06	.15	−.04	.00	.11	.08	.08	.20
NEP scale	−.08	.11	−.07	−.02	.06	.07	.00	.21
Env. funding scale	−.09	.17	−.06	.09	.10	.14	.00	.16
Env. regulations scale	−.13	.10	−.12	−.02	.06	.08	.07	.23
Personal beh. scale	.12	.01	−.16	.07	.02	.21	.04	.04
Public beh. scale	.04	.16	.07	.12	−.04	.07	−.06	.03
Weigel, 1977								
Env. behavior index	−.24	.42	—	.32	—	—	—	.34
Studies Reporting *gama*								
Buttel & Flinn, 1974								
Env. as a prob. (1968)	—	.51	.22	—	−.12	—	—	—
Env. as a prob. (1969)	—	.28	.32	—	−.08	—	—	—
Env. as a prob. (1970)	—	.22	.09	—	.03	—	.02	—
Constantini & Hanf, 1972								
Env. concern scale	NR[f]	.20	−.13	—	—	—	—	.22 .36
Dillman & Christenson, 1972								
Pollution value index	−.21	.20	.12	.17	.05	—	.001[g]	.13
Harris, 1970a								
Air poll. in state	−.08	.11	—	—	.19	—	—	—
Air poll. in community	−.19	.26	—	—	.57	—	—	—
Water poll. in state	NA[e]	.05	—	—	.07	—	—	—
Water poll. in community	NA[e]	.22	—	—	.41	—	—	—
Harris, 1970b								
Air poll. in state	−.15	.20	—	—	.15	—	—	—
Air poll. in community	−.20	.19	—	—	.35	—	—	—
Water poll. in state	−.12	.15	—	—	−.06	—	—	—
Water poll. in community	−.23	.25	—	—	.06	—	—	—
Hornback, 1974								
Env. most impt. prob. (1970)	−.19	—	—	—	.04	.04	−.06	NA[e]
Env. most impt. prob. (1972)	−.14	—	—	—	NA[e]	.03	−.12	.11
McEvoy, 1972								
Env. concern	−.06	.30	.22	—	.06	−.16	—	—
Murch, 1974								
Env. concern	—	.15	—	.01	—	.07	—	—
Murdock & Schriner, 1977								
Support env. protection	−.26	.24	.04	.15	—	—	—	—
Nat'l Wildlife Fed., 1972								
Env. concern	−.08	.27	.15	—	.12	−.08	—	—

[a] A positive coefficient means that urban residents are more "environmentally concerned" than rural residents.

[b] A positive coefficient means that women are more "environmentally concerned" than men.

[c] A positive coefficient means that Democrats are more "environmentally concerned" than Republicans.

[d] A positive coefficient means that liberals are more "environmentally concerned" than conservatives. Where two coefficients are reported, the first refers to "Anti-Lassiez Faire Liberalism" and the second refers to "Welfare State Liberalism."

[e] NA means that data were not available for that year.

[f] NR means that the actual coefficient was not given, but the author reported "no relationship."

[g] Chi-square analysis was used and the chi-square statistic was reported as significant at the given level.

[h] A difference-of-means test was used and the difference of means was reported as significant at the given level.

studies attempting to measure respondents' level of *concern* with environmental problems, environmental quality, etc. Such concern is tapped in a variety of ways in the studies in Table 1, including perceiving environmental problems as serious, supporting efforts by government to protect environmental quality, engaging in behaviors aimed at improving environmental quality, etc. Though interesting in their own right, studies that measure such variables as trust in government to solve environmental problems (Althoff and Greig, 1977) or perception of the causes of environmental degradation (Bowman, 1977) are not included, because these variables do not provide an unambiguous indicator of respondents' degree of concern with environmental quality. However, the studies listed in Table 1 provide a wide range of indicators of environmental concern.[4]

Second, because we are interested in the distribution of environmental concern among the general public, we included studies which use sample surveys of heterogeneous populations—typically probability samples of the general public within a community, a state, or the entire nation.[5] We did not include studies of relatively homogeneous populations such as college students, since these samples provide insufficient variation on such variables as age and education—making it meaningless to attempt to correlate these variables with environmental concern.

Third, we focused on studies which report bivariate measures of association.[6] The most commonly reported measures of association between demographic characteristics and environmental concern are gamma and Pearson's r, and studies employing these measures comprise the bulk of entries in Table 1. To examine the broadest range of studies possible, we included a number of studies which do not report measures of association, but report the necessary frequency distributions to allow us to compute gammas (Harris, 1970a, 1970b). Finally, we included studies which report *r*'s or gammas for some variables, but report chi-square or difference-of-means tests for other variables. To aid in comparing studies, we separated those which mainly report *r*'s from those reporting gammas, and added footnotes to identify instances of the use of chi-square or difference-of-means tests.[7] With the above criteria in mind, we turn our attention to Table 1.

---

[4] We did not include studies which examine energy attitudes, because in many studies such attitudes do not appear to reflect a clear pro- to anti-environmental dimension (focusing instead on causes of the energy crisis, and so forth). However, in their review of the few studies which examined attitudes and/or behavior in support of energy *conservation*, Olsen and Goodnight (1977:11–16) report empirical generalizations which are similar to those which emerge from our Table 1 (except that income is found to be a good predictor of energy conservation, but not of environmental concern).

[5] Since the vast majority of existing studies were conducted in the United States, we confine our search for empirical generalizations to U.S. data. After more foreign studies become available it will be appropriate to search for cross-national generalizations, but there are not enough non-U.S. studies to warrant this at present.

[6] We do not report significance levels for the measures of association in Table 1 because: (1) not all studies report significance test, and (2) studies which report significance tests vary considerably in sample size. Since significance levels are affected by sample size, to avoid misleading comparisons they are not reported.

Evidence for the Age Hypothesis: The age hypothesis posits a negative association between age and environmental concern. There is considerable support for it in Table 1 as most of the coefficients in the first column are negative. Further, the results show that the size of the coefficients for age are relatively strong when compared to other coefficients in the table. For the most part, the coefficients range from −.2 to −.4, which suggests a moderate negative relationship between age and environmental concern. Also, the two longitudinal studies which report data for age suggest that it has been a consistent correlate of environmental concern over the past several years (Grossman and Potter, 1977b; Hornback, 1974).

While the bulk of the evidence clearly supports the age hypothesis, a few findings fail to do so. Both Koenig (1975) and Constantini and Hanf (1972) report no relationship; McEvoy (1972) reports only a negligible (i.e., less than .1) negative relationship; while Arbuthnot and Lingg (1975), Tognacci et al. (1972), Van Liere and Dunlap (1978), and Harris (1970a) all report similarly slight relationships between age and at least one of their measures of environmental concern. On the whole, however, the preponderance of evidence must be viewed as supportive of the age hypothesis.

Evidence for the Social Class Hypothesis: The associations between educational level and environmental concern (column 2, Table 1) support the hypothesis that education is positively associated with environmental concern; they are all positive and most are moderately strong (generally ranging from .15 to 40). Further, in the longitudinal studies the coefficients are fairly consistent over time (Buttel and Flinn, 1974; Grossman and Potter, 1977b). As was the case with age, however, some studies report only a negligible association for at least one measure of environmental concern (Buttel and Johnson, 1977; Grossman and Potter, 1977b; Malkis and Grasmick, 1977; Tognacci et al., 1972; Van Liere and Dunlap, 1978; Harris, 1970a), while Koenig (1975) reports no relationship.

---

[7] Unfortunately, we could not include studies reporting percentage differences but insufficient data to allow us to compute gammas (Althoff and Greig, 1977; Mitchell, 1979), or studies employing multivariate analyses but not reporting bivariate measures of association (Sharma et al., 1975).

The associations between income and environmental concern (column 3) are quite ambiguous and fail to support the hypothesized positive association. A few studies report a moderately positive association, supporting the hypothesis that higher income groups are more environmentally concerned than lower income groups (Buttel and Flinn, 1974; McEvoy, 1972). However, a number of studies report a negligible association (Grossman and Potter, 1977b; Koenig, 1975; Springer and Constantini, 1974; Murdock and Schriner, 1977), and others report a negative relationship (Malkis and Grasmick, 1977; Van Liere and Dunlap, 1978; Constantini and Hanf, 1972). Further, the longitudinal studies suggest that the relationship between income and environmental concern may be changing over time (Buttel and Flinn, 1974; Grossman and Potter, 1977b).

Finally, while a majority of the associations between occupational prestige and environmental concern (Table 1, column 4) are positive, most are so slight that it is difficult to conclude that the hypothesized relationship is supported. The results of Grossman and Potter (1977b), Koenig (1975), Murch (1974), and for one of Malkis and Grasmick's (1977) measures suggest little association between occupational prestige and environmental concern. On the other hand, Weigel (1977), Dillman and Christenson (1972), and Murdock and Schriner (1977) report moderate associations between prestige and environmental concern. Van Liere and Dunlap (1978) report the relationship to be positive for some measures of environmental concern and negative for others.

In general, evidence relating to the broad social class hypothesis—i.e., considering the three dimensions of education, income, and occupational prestige—provides very weak support for the assertion that social class is positively associated with environmental concern. What support there is rests primarily on the moderately strong relationship between environmental concern and education. The evidence for occupational prestige provides very weak support at best, while the overall evidence for income is highly ambiguous. Thus, our review points to the need for more careful conceptualization and analyses of the effects of education, income, and occupational prestige on environmental concern. By no means should they be used as equivalent indicators of social class when examining the social bases of environmental concern.

Evidence for the Residence Hypothesis. The associations in column 5 generally support the hypothesis that urban residence is positively related to environmental concern. However, there are a number of contradictions to this pattern, as Grossman and Potter (1977b), Van Liere and Dunlap (1978), Buttel and Flinn (1974), and Harris (1970b) all report at least one negative relationship. More important, the coefficients vary considerably in magnitude, both within and across studies, suggesting that the relationship between residence and environmental concern may depend on the indicator of environmental concern being examined. For example, Buttel and Flinn (1976) report a fairly strong relationship between awareness of environmental problems and residence, but a much weaker relationship between support for environmental reform and residence. More generally, Tremblay and Dunlap (1978), using the Harris (1970a) data, suggest that residence is most strongly associated with environmental concern when *local* environmental conditions are the focus of attention.

Evidence for the Sex Hypothesis: Although there are conflicting hypotheses and limited data relating sex to environmental concern, we included sex in our review to examine the degree to which a sex–environmental concern relationship might exist, even though ignored by most researchers. As expected, the evidence regarding sex and environmental concern is quite meager, and the results listed in column 6 are inconclusive. Van Liere and Dunlap (1978) report modest (greater than .1) positive associations, indicating that females are more environmentally concerned than males, for a few of their measures of environmental concern, while Arbuthnot and Lingg (1975) and McEvoy (1972) report modest negative associations. The remaining associations are less than .1, and the overall pattern suggests that sex is not substantially associated with environmental concern. This conclusion should be viewed as tentative, however, as it is based on limited evidence.

Evidence for the Political Hypothesis: Looking first at partisan identification (column 7), we see that there is some support for the hypothesis that Democrats are more environmentally concerned than Republicans. A few studies report moderate associations between Democratic party affiliation and environmental concern (Buttel and Johnson, 1977; Grossman and Potter, 1977b; Koenig, 1975), and both Tognacci et al. (1972) and Dillman and Christenson (1972) report Democrats to be significantly more pro-environmental than Republicans. However, the coefficients are not very large, and imply a weak association at best. In general, the evidence appears to support Buttel and Flinn's (1976) assertion that party is not a crucial variable in explaining variation in environmental concern among the general public.[8]

---

[8] However, considerable evidence suggests that among political elites (e.g., legislators) and the college-educated public, Democrats are significantly more environmentally concerned than are Republicans (Buttel and Flinn, 1978a; Dunlap and Allen, 1976).

In contrast, there is substantial support for the hypothesis that liberals are more environmentally concerned than conservatives (column 8). Typically the measure of ideology used is simply self-identification on a liberal-conservative continuum, but a few studies have measured ideology (including different dimensions) via attitude scales (usually "welfare-state liberalism" and "anti-laissez-faire liberalism"—Buttel and Johnson, 1977; Weigel, 1977; Constantini and Hanf, 1972). Regardless of the measure used, the coefficients are virtually always in the expected direction (Buttel and Johnson, 1977, report the only exceptions) and are often of moderate magnitude.

Summary: The review of evidence on the social correlates of environmental concern suggests that only three of the hypothesized relationships should be considered empirical generalizations. Age, education, and political ideology are consistently (albeit moderately) associated with environmental concern, and thus we have confidence in concluding that younger, well-educated, and politically liberal persons tend to be more concerned about environmental quality than their older, less educated, and politically conservative counterparts.

The evidence is less conclusive for residence, political party identification, and occupational prestige, since they are correlated more weakly and/or less consistently with environmental concern. In the first two cases, however, it has been suggested that qualified versions of the relationships can be regarded as empirical generalizations. Thus, Tremblay and Dunlap (1978) review evidence which consistently supports a positive association between urban residence and concern with environmental problems at the *local* level, while evidence summarized by Buttel and Flinn (1978a) and Dunlap and Allen (1976) suggests that among political elites and the college-educated segment of the public, Democrats are significantly more environmentally concerned than are Republicans.

In the case of occupation the qualifications have been more substantial, as a variety of nonvertical cleavages have been suggested as more important than prestige per se: business occupations (Buttel and Johnson, 1977; Costantini and Hanf, 1972), technologically dependent occupations (Malkis and Grasmick, 1977) and nature-exploitative occupations (Harry, 1971) have all been hypothesized to be negatively associated with environmental concern. Such relationships have received only limited attention in the empirical literature, however, and the evidence is inconclusive. In view of the weak support for the occupational prestige–environmental concern relationship, we believe these other dimensions of occupational differentiation deserve further empirical investigation as possible correlates of environmental concern.

Finally, the evidence regarding income and sex suggests that they are not systematically correlated with environmental concern, although relatively few studies have examined the sex–environmental concern relationship and we therefore regard the evidence on it as tentative.

Concluding Remarks

The foregoing review indicates that researchers have had limited success in explaining the social bases of environmental concern. This conclusion is suggested by the fact that the coefficients in Table 1 are generally quite low (even in the cases of age, education, and political ideology they reach only modest magnitudes). It is bolstered by the results of the few multivariate analyses which have examined the explanatory power of several sociodemographic variables in combination. Although they usually include nearly all the variables listed in Table 1, such studies typically explain only 10 to 15 percent of the variance in environmental concern (e.g., Buttel and Flinn, 1978a; 1978b; Grossman and Potter, 1977a; 1977b; Malkis and Grasmick, 1977; Sharma et al., 1975).[9]

The limited utility of demographic variables in explaining variation in environmental concern points to the widespread distribution of such concern in our society. Although somewhat stronger among the young, well-educated, and liberal segments of society, environmental concern is by no means restricted to persons with such characteristics (e.g., Dillman and Christenson, 1972; McEvoy, 1972; Mitchell, 1979), as indicated by the modest associations reported for these variables in Table 1.

In view of this, we offer two suggestions for future research which we believe might improve researchers' ability to explain the social bases of concern about environmental quality, and also make their research more relevant to environmental policy making. First, given the widespread distribution of generalized environmental concern, we believe it would be profitable to focus attention on specific environmental issues and policies. On the one hand, researchers should reconsider the practice of lumping such diverse issues as air and water pollution, population control, and wildlife protection together into global measures of environmental concern (as do many studies reviewed in this paper). It is unclear whether persons concerned about one of these issues will be equally concerned about the others and at least some of the variation in the associations in Table 1 may stem from variation in the dimensions of environmental concern being tapped by the diverse measures (for suggestive evidence in this regard see Buttel and Johnson, 1977; Van Liere and Dunlap, 1978). On the other hand, researchers should pay more attention to the trade-offs involved in improving and protecting environmental quality. Most environmental policies entail a variety of costs, including higher prices or taxes and restrictions on individual or corporate behaviors, and researchers could examine public support for the policies in view of these costs (see, for example, Mitchell, 1979).

---

[9] In addition to examining the *cumulative* effects of several variables on environmental concern, multivariate analyses can also shed light on their *relative* effects. Additional analyses sorting out the relative effects of such variables as age, education, and residence would be helpful in establishing more solidly the empirical generalizations suggested by the bivariate results.

Second, the trade-offs between environmental quality and other widely valued ends such as low taxes, economic growth, free enterprise, and private property rights suggest the fruitfulness of examining differential commitments to the latter as determinants of support for environmental protection. The importance of these cognitive (as opposed to demographic) variables is suggested by a recent study which found support for private property rights, laissez-faire government, and economic growth to be strongly correlated with environmental concern, and to explain far more variation in the latter than do the demographic variables reviewed in this paper (Dunlap and Van Liere, 1980).[10]

In sum, we are arguing that in order to achieve a better understanding of the social bases of environmental concern researchers should conceptualize such concern more precisely than has generally been done in the past, and also pay at least as much attention to the cognitive as to the demographic determinants of support for environmental protection.[11]

References

Althoff, P., and W. H. Greig
1977 "Environmental pollution control: two views from the general population." Environment and Behavior 9:441–56.

---

[10] It is also suggested by the fact that our review showed political ideology, primarily a cognitive characteristic, to be consistently associated with environmental concern. Although partisan identification also involves cognitive processes, it is somewhat more likely to be "inherited" from parents than is the case with ideology (e.g., Niemi et al., 1978).

[11] We should stress that cognitive variables ought to be examined *in addition to*, rather than *in lieu of*, demographic variables, for it is likely that support for economic growth, laissez-faire government, private property rights, etc. will be related to age, education, income, residence, etc. Thus, the most powerful analyses of the social bases of environmental concern will likely be those which consider both its demographic and cognitive determinants.

Arbuthnot, J., and S. Lingg
1975 "A comparison of French and American environmental behaviors, knowledge and attitudes." International Journal of Psychology 10:275–81.

Bowman, F. H.
1977 "Public opinion and the environment: post-earth day attitudes among college students." Environment and Behavior 9:385–416.

Buttel, F. H., and W. L. Flinn
1974 "The structure of support for the environmental movement, 1968–1970." Rural Sociology 39:56–69.
1976 "Environmental politics: the structuring of partisan and ideological cleavages in mass environmental attitudes." Sociological Quarterly 17:477–90.
1978a "The politics of environmental concern: the impacts of party identification and political ideology on environmental attitudes." Environment and Behavior 10:17–36.
1978b "Social class and mass environmental beliefs: a reconsideration." Environment and Behavior 10:433–50.

Buttel, F. H., and D. E. Johnson
1977 "Dimensions of environmental concern: factor structure, correlates, and implications for research." Journal of Environmental Education 9:49–64.

Constantini, E., and K. Hanf
1972 "Environmental concern and Lake Tahoe: a study of elite perceptions, backgrounds, and attitudes." Environment and Behavior 4:209–42.

Dillman, D. A., and J. A. Christenson
1972 "The public value for pollution control." Pp. 237–256 in W. R. Burch, Jr., N. H. Cheek, Jr., and L. Taylor (eds.), Social Behavior, Natural Resources, and the Environment. New York: Harper and Row.

Dunlap, R. E.
1975 "The impact of political orientation on environmental attitudes and actions." Environment and Behavior 7:428–54.

Dunlap, R. E., and M. P. Allen
1976 "Partisan differences on environmental issues: a congressional roll-call analysis." Western Political Quarterly 29:384–97.

Dunlap, R. E., J. K. Grineeks, and M. Rokeach
1975 "Human values and 'pro-environmental' behavior." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association, Victoria, B.C.

Dunlap, R. E., and K. D. Van Liere
1978 "Environmental concern: a bibliography of empirical studies and brief appraisal of the literature." Public Administration Series Bibliography No. 44. Monticello, Illinois: Vance Bibliographies.
1980 "Commitment to the dominant social paradigm and support for ecological policies: an empirical analysis." Revision of a paper presented at the 1978 Meeting of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, San Francisco.

Grossman, G. M., and H. R. Potter
1977a "A longitudinal analysis of environmental concern: evidence from

national surveys." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Chicago.

1977b "A trend analysis of competing models of environmental attitudes." Working Paper #127, Institute for the Study of Social Change, Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, Purdue University.

Harris, Louis, and Associates, Inc.

1970a "The public's view of environmental problems in the state of Oregon." New York: Louis Harris and Associates.

1970b "The public's view of environmental problems in the state of Washington." New York: Louis Harris and Associates.

Harry, J.

1971 "Work and leisure: situational attitudes." Pacific Sociological Review 14:302–09.

Hornback, K. E.

1974 "Orbits of opinion: the role of age in the environmental movement's attentive public." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, Michigan State University.

Koenig, D. J.

1975 "Additional research on environmental activism." Environment and Behavior 7:472–85.

Labovitz, S., and R. Hagedorn

1976 Introduction to Social Research, 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Malkis, A., and H. G. Grasmick

1977 "Support for the ideology of the environmental movement: tests of alternative hypotheses." Western Sociological Review 8:25–47.

Mannheim, K.

1952 "The problem of generations." Pp. 276–320 in Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge. New York: Oxford University Press.

Martinson, O. B., and E. A. Wilkening

1975 "A scale to measure awareness of environmental problems: structure and correlates." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Sociological Society, Chicago.

Maslow, A. H.

1970 Motivation and Personality, 2nd ed. New York: Viking Press.

McEvoy, J., III

1972 "The American concern with the environment." Pp. 214–236 in W. R. Burch, Jr., N. H. Cheek, Jr., and L. Taylor (eds.), Social Behavior, Natural Resources, and the Environment. New York: Harper and Row.

Mitchell, R. C.

1979 "Silent spring/solid majorities." Public Opinion 2:16–20, 55.

Morrison, D. E., K. E. Hornback, and W. K. Warner

1972 "The environmental movement: some preliminary observations and predictions." Pp. 259–279 in W. R. Burch, Jr., N. H. Cheek, Jr., and Taylor (eds.), Social Behavior, Natural Resources, and the Environment. New York: Harper and Row.

Murch, A. W.

1974 "Who cares about the environment?: the nature and origins of environmental concern." Pp. 9–42 in A. W. Murch (ed.), Environmental Concern. New York: MSS Information Corporation.

Murdock, S. H., and E. C. Schriner
1977 "Social and economic determinants of the level of support for environmental protection and economic growth in a rural population." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

National Wildlife Federation
1972 "The U.S. public considers its environment: survey II." Washington, D.C.: National Wildlife Federation.

Niemi, R. G., R. D. Ross, and J. Alexander
1978 "The similarity of political values of parents and college-age youths." Public Opinion Quarterly 43:503–20.

Ogden, D. M., Jr.
1971 "The future of the environmental struggle." Pp. 243–250 in R. L. Meek and J. A. Straayer (eds.), The Politics of Neglect. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Olsen, M. E., and J. A. Goodnight
1977 Social aspects of energy conservation. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of Commerce, National Technical Information Service.

Passino, E. M., and J. W. Lounsbury
1976 "Sex differences in opposition to and support for construction of a proposed nuclear power plant." Pp. 180–184 in L. M. Ward, S. Coren, A. Gruft and J. B. Collins (eds.), The Behavioral Basis of Design, Book 1. Stroudsburg, Pa.: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross.

Sharma, N. C., J. E. Kivlin, and F. C. Fliegel
1975 "Environmental pollution: is there enough public concern to lead to action?" Environment and Behavior 7:455–71.

Springer, J. F., and E. Constantini
1974 "Public opinion and the environment: an issue in search of a home." Pp. 195–224 in S. S. Nafel (ed.), Environmental Politics. New York: Praeger.

Tognacci, L. N., R. H. Weigel, M. F. Wideen, and D. T. A. Vernon
1972 "Environmental quality: how universal is public concern?" Environment and Behavior 4:73–86.

Tremblay, K. R., Jr., and R. E. Dunlap
1978 "Rural-urban residence and concern with environmental quality: a replication and extension." Rural Sociology 43:474–91.

Van Liere, K. D., and R. E. Dunlap
1978 "Environmental concern: consistency among its dimensions, conceptualizations and empirical correlates." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association, Spokane, Washington.

Weigel, R. H.
1977 "Ideological and demographic correlates of proecology behavior." Journal of Social Psychology 103:39–47.

Response Styles in Telephone and Household Interviewing: A Field Experiment

LAWRENCE A. JORDAN, ALFRED C. MARCUS AND LEO G. REEDER

Although telephone surveys are an attractive alternative to household interviews, it is important to determine whether the data collected by the two methods are comparable. Initial results have been very promising—recent comparisons of the two methods do not reveal large systematic differences (Bushery et al., 1978; Cannell and Fowler, 1965; Colombotos, 1969; Groves, 1977; Hochstim, 1967; Klecka and Tuchfarber, 1978; Locander et al., 1976; Reeder, 1976, 1977; Rogers, 1976; Schmiedeskamp, 1962; Siemiatycki, 1979; Wiseman, 1972).

Abstract Two independent groups from the Los Angeles metropolitan area were sampled and interviewed—one was sampled by a form of random digit dialing and interviewed by telephone; the other was sampled on an area probability basis and interviewed face-to-face in households. Few sociodemographic differences were found between the telephone and household samples, suggesting that the two methods sampled essentially the same population. There were differences in the quantity and quality of the data obtained, however, and the telephone sample had more missing data for family income, more acquiescence, evasiveness, and extremeness response bias on attitude questions, and more responses to checklists.

Lawrence A. Jordan is a Research Scientist at System Development Corporation, Santa Monica, California 90406. Alfred C. Marcus is Senior Statistician in the School of Public Health, Division of Behavioral Sciences, UCLA. The late Leo G. Reeder, who died tragically in a plane crash before this article could be published, was Professor of Public Health and Professor of Sociology, UCLA.

This paper is an expanded version of a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Statistical Association in San Diego, August 1978. The research was supported by Grant Number 5-R18-CA-18451, "Processes in Health Behavior and Cancer Control," awarded by the National Cancer Institute, DHEW, to Leo G. Reeder, Principal Investigator. Please send reprint requests to Lawrence A. Jordan, at the address above.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University
Published by Elsevier North Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/80/0044-210/$1.75

In 1976 the Los Angeles Health Survey (LAHS) research team conducted household (HH) and telephone (TC) surveys at the same time and with essentially the same instrument, attempting to keep the HH and TC interviews as nearly alike as possible. The LAHS is an ongoing annual or biennial survey of health behavior and health attitudes in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. The interviewers had many months and often years of experience conducting household surveys, and some had prior experience with telephone surveys. Like Fleishman and Berk (1979), however, we found that most of our interviewers preferred household surveys.

For the HH samples, the LAHS used the sampling frame developed by the UCLA Survey Research Center for its Los Angeles Metropolitan Area Sample (LAMAS). This frame contains approximately 20,000 computer-readable addresses sampled on an area probability basis. Samples drawn from the frame may be characterized as three-stage cluster samples, with probabilities proportional to size. Each housing unit (HU) in Los Angeles County has an equal chance of being selected (Sumner, 1978).

For the TC sample, there was an attempt at matching the cluster design of the LAMAS frame. With the use of reverse telephone directories, telephone exchanges were sampled from the addresses in the block groups representing the secondary sampling units from the frame; then calls were made to telephone numbers generated by appending four random digits to the obtained exchanges. The exchanges cover much larger areas than the original census tracts, however, and only 20.8 percent of the TC respondents lived in the targeted census tracts.

For both the HH and TC samples, one adult respondent per household was randomly selected by means of the Kish (1965: 400) procedure. Consequently, the unweighted sample statistics are estimates of the population of HUs in Los Angeles. To make inferences about the population of adult persons, it is necessary to weight the sample observations inversely by the number of adults in each HU. In the present study, we found that weighted and unweighted analyses of these data were almost invariably the same, but that there were a few borderline results which were significant in one analysis, but not in the other. We have therefore adopted the conservative practice of interpreting only those results that were robust under weighting, or statistically significant in both the weighted and unweighted analyses.

The initial listings consisted of 2,020 addresses for the HH sample, and 1,114 telephone numbers for the TC sample. For the HH sample, 137 units (6.8 percent) were considered ineligible (vacancy, no dwelling at address, language barrier), and for the TC sample, 401 units

(36.0 percent) were considered ineligible (discontinued, business number, not-in-service, language barrier). For the HH sample, 1,210 of 1,883 (64.3 percent) of the eligible units provided completed interviews, and for the TC sample, 303 of 613 (49.4 percent) eligible units provided completed interviews. To a certain extent, this difference in response rates can be attributed to the higher refusal rates in the telephone survey (29 percent vs. 18 percent), which is a finding consistent with previous research (Groves, 1977; Siemiatycki, 1979). However, as shown below, there is no evidence that these different response rates contributed to demographic or other biases in the two samples.

Results

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

The most striking difference between the HH and TC samples is the amount of missing data for income (Table 1). Respondents were asked for total family income on a 15-point scale. For the HH sample, respondents were asked whether their family incomes were over or under $10,000. Depending on the answer, they were given one of two flash cards showing a graduated scale of income categories or intervals (e.g., less than $5,000; $5,000–$6,999; $7,000–$8,999, etc.). Respondents were then asked to identify the category which contained

Table 1. Selected Demographic Variables—Means for Household (HH) and Telephone Comparison (TC) Samples—Unweighted, 1976

	HH Sample *N = 1,210*		*TC Sample* *N = 303*		t *for Mean Difference*
	$\overline{X}$	s	$\overline{X}$	s	
Age	42.8	17.4	44.01	18.1	−1.16
% Male	0.43	0.50	0.37	0.48	1.19
% Married	0.55	0.50	0.50	0.50	1.56
N Adults	1.84	0.75	1.82	0.78	0.41
N Children	0.88	1.37	0.76	1.23	1.39
Income	8.21	3.82	7.61	3.48	2.49*
% Missing	0.12	0.32	0.21	0.41	−4.58***
Mid-education	12.46	3.57	12.25	3.36	0.93
SEI	48.80	22.50	47.83	22.74	0.67
% Anglo	0.67	0.47	0.73	0.44	2.01*[a]
% Hispanic	0.06	0.24	0.08	0.26	−1.27

Significance levels for unweighted analysis:
* $p < .05$.
*** $p < .001$.
[a] Significance criterion was not met for weighted analysis.

their total family incomes. For the TC sample, respondents were also asked whether their incomes were over or under $10,000. However, in the absence of flash cards, the telephone interviewers read the income categories and coded the one containing the respondent's total family income. The income question is one of the most sensitive of the sociodemographic questions, and some respondents either refuse or claim not to know the answer. We found that 12 percent of the HH respondents and 21 percent or nearly twice as many TC respondents did not answer. Similar results were also obtained in a recent Canadian survey reported by Siemiatycki (1979), who reported a missing data rate for income of 14 percent in household interviews, compared to 19 percent in telephone interviews.

In the University of Michigan study, Groves (1977) also reported more missing income data from the telephone survey. He found that the missing data rate declined for subsequent telephone surveys, however, which he attributed to improved interviewing technique. Our own experience has been similar. For example, the missing data rate for income dropped from 21 percent in our 1976 telephone survey to 15 percent in a similar survey conducted in 1977. It remains to be seen whether, as more experience is gained with telephone methods, the missing data rate can be reduced to the 12 percent obtained face-to-face. We have obtained more "don't know" than "refused" responses for income, and we assume that many of these "don't know" responses are indirect refusals from reluctant respondents (Robins, 1963). A rather large proportion of the missing income data for the 1976 telephone survey was in the "don't know" category (14.5 percent), suggesting that respondents were being evasive rather than refusing the information outright.

In view of the large amounts of missing data for income, the obtained mean difference on income is ambiguous. The groups are not significantly different on other indicators of socioeconomic status, such as education and Duncan's socioeconomic index (SEI), so in the absence of confirming evidence of a socioeconomic difference between the samples, we conclude that the obtained income difference is probably spurious or, if real, is rather small in size. Table 1 also shows that the TC sample has a significantly larger proportion of Anglos. This comparison was not significant in a weighted analysis of the same data, however, so we recommend caution in accepting the finding.

There are very few demographic differences beteen the HH and TC samples, confirming the findings of Groves (1977) and Klecka and Tuchfarber (1978). With over 1,500 respondents, we have adequate power to detect quite small differences between the samples, and our results suggest that—apart from the greater amount of missing income data in the TC sample—the two samples are essentially the same on all sociodemographic variables. This lack of demographic differences is a fortunate result, since telephone interviewing may soon be the dominant method for obtaining most kinds of survey data.

ATTITUDE VARIABLES

The seven attitude variables in Table 2 are content scales for measuring aspects of respondents' health beliefs (Berkanovic, 1980) (Kirscht, et al., 1976) and they are composed of 4-point Likert items (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). There were 32 items in all, administered at three points in the questionnaire, and then scored to form the seven attitude scales, briefly described below.

Susceptibility—6 items expressing personal susceptibility to illness, and lack of belief in the efficacy of preventive health behavior.

Acceptability—6 items expressing general satisfaction with the quality of medical care, and with physician courtesy and concern.

Accessibility—6 items expressing satisfaction with the availability of services and lack of need to make "special arrangements" for medical care.

Cost Concern—2 items expressing concern about the cost of medical services.

Seriousness—5 items expressing how seriously illnesses are viewed.

Efficacy of Care—3 items expressing belief in the efficacy of medical care.

Motivation—4 items expressing the value placed on health.

As in the case of the income question, administration of the attitude items was supplemented by a hand card for the HH sample, with the four response categories displayed for the respondent's use. The instruction read:

> I'm going to read some statements related to health and illness. I'd like you to tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. People have many different opinions about health—so there are no right or wrong answers. We are simply interested in *your* opinions. (HAND CARD). Please tell me if you *strongly agree, agree, disagree,* or *strongly disagree* with the following statements.

For the TC sample, the instructions were identical, but hand cards could not be used, and the interviewer was required to repeat the response categories as the items were read.

An attempt was made to balance the scales for keying in the

Table 2. Selected Attitude Variables—Means and Standard Deviations for Household (HH) and Telephone Comparison (TC) Samples—Unweighted, 1976

	Items in Scale		HH Sample $N = 1{,}210$		TC Sample $N = 303$		t for	X^2 for
	Agree Keyed	Disagree Keyed	$\overline{X}$	s	$\overline{X}$	s	Mean Diff.	SD Diff.
Attitude variables								
Susceptibility	3	3	−1.79	2.34	−2.08	2.74	1.86	12.82***
Acceptability	3	3	0.92	2.76	0.64	3.58	1.48	36.14***
Accessibility	3	3	1.97	2.34	2.31	2.84	−2.16*[a]	19.56***
Cost concern	1	1	−0.45	1.42	−0.28	1.67	−1.79	13.56***
Seriousness	2	3	2.72	1.91	2.61	2.07	0.88	3.23
Efficacy of care	1	2	3.39	1.46	3.47	1.74	−0.82	15.95***
Motivation	3	1	−4.13	1.94	−3.85	2.02	−2.23*[a]	0.80
Responsive bias measures								
Agreement bias	—	—	12.53	3.93	13.88	4.26	−5.25***	3.25
Evasiveness (ln)	—	—	0.48	0.67	0.61	0.66	−3.03**	0.11
Extremeness (ln)	—	—	1.91	1.07	2.51	0.90	−8.99***	13.58***

Significance levels for unweighted analysis:
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.
*** $p < .001$.

[a] Significance criterion was not met for weighted analysis.

agree-disagree direction. For example, the Cost Concern scale contains the pair of items:

(A) When I think about going to the doctor I'm concerned about how much it will cost.
(B) I don't worry much about the cost when I think about going to the doctor.

Persons concerned about the cost of medical care would tend to agree with the first statement and disagree with the second, so that the two items can be considered balanced for agreement. Balancing is an important precaution if the items are affected by "acquiescence" or agreement response bias (Jordan, 1977). As shown in Table 2, the first four scales are balanced; the next two are slighty unbalanced, with one more disagree than agree item; and the seventh scale is unbalanced, with three agree-keyed items and only one disagree-keyed item.

The three response bias measures in Table 2 were also obtained from the health belief items. The agreement bias variable was obtained by scoring all 32 items in the "agree" direction regardless of content keying. The evasiveness variable was computed as a count of "don't know" and "no answer" responses. The extremeness variable was computed as the difference between the number of extreme or "strong" responses and the number of middle-category responses. In raw score form, the evasiveness and extremeness variables were markedly skewed, so the variables were normalized by adding a constant and taking logarithms.

The main message in Table 2 is that the TC sample is higher on all three response style measures. The TC sample has a greater tendency to agree, to omit responses, and to use more extreme categories. The extremeness effect is the strongest of the three response style effects, and is significant at well beyond the .001 level, with a mean difference on the order of one-half a standard deviation. By contrast, there are only minor mean differences for the seven content measures. There were slight mean differences between the HH and TC samples for the Accessibility and Motivation scales, but they were fairly small and were not robust under weighting. Note that acquiescence and content are confounded for unbalanced scales having unequal numbers of agree- and disagree-keyed items, and mean differences in acquiescence can lead to spurious mean differences on the content measures. Although there were only minor mean differences on the content measures, we found that the TC sample had larger standard deviations on all seven content measures—significantly so for five of the seven (last column of Table 2). The larger variances in the TC sample are attributable to the extremeness response bias, since the extreme categories for the item responses contribute more than the middle categories to variances for the content scales.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS AND CHECKLISTS

Another important issue in assessing the comparability of the two modes of interviewing concerns the quantity of information obtained for each method. Telephone interaction is typically faster paced than face-to-face interaction, and usually requires more verbal patter to maintain the interest and attention of respondents. Our interviewers report, for example, that routine pauses in the conversation, which can be tolerated in a face-to-face situation, often seem interminable on the telephone. They also missed visual cues for deciding when to probe or pause for a more complete response. Fleishman and Berk (1979) reported that their interviewers strongly preferred face-to-face interviewing and thought that the quality of data was better for face-to-face interviews. Such differences in the modes of interaction suggest that detailed information might be more difficult to obtain in telephone interviews. For example, Groves (1977) found a greater frequency of multiple responses to open-ended questions for the HH group, suggesting a greater facilitation of communication with household interviews. Accordingly, we compared the groups on number of responses to several open-ended questions, including (1) the number of reasons mentioned by the respondent for not seeing a doctor when a need was perceived (in the past 12 months); (2) the number of acute problems the respondent reported having within two months of the interview; (3) the number of chronic health conditions reported by the respondent; and (4) the number of medications and treatments that are currently prescribed for the respondent by a physician. As shown in Table 3, none of these differences was significant, nor was there a significant mean difference on a composite measure created by summing across all open-ended responses to the above items ($t = 1.39$, NS).

A different picture emerged, however, when we examined counts of responses to checklist items. Questions of this kind included a list of 10 preventive health behavior activities (e.g., exercising, dieting, stop smoking) and six types of health advice given by family members and friends. In the HH administration, respondents were shown a card and asked to indicate which of the statements or activities in the list applied to them. For the TC sample, each response was read separately and respondents were then asked if that particular response applied to them. In every case the TC respondents gave significantly more responses to each checklist item than the HH respondents. For

Table 3. Household-Telephone Comparisons for Open-ended and Checklist Questions, 1976

	HH Sample Mean N = 1,210	*TC Sample Mean N = 303*	*K-S Test[a] D*	*t for Mean Diff.*
Open-ended questions				
N reasons for not seeing doctor	.346	.314	.021	—
N acute problems mentioned	.346	.287	.045	—
N chronic problems mentioned	.800	.746	.029	—
N medications	.834	.838	.024	—
Sum of open-ended questions	2.326	2.185	.034	1.39
Checklist questions				
Voluntary preventive health behavior	1.037	1.399	.118**	—
Kinds of family advice	.916	1.307	.238***	—
Kinds of friend advice	.607	1.059	.219***	—
Sum of checklist questions	2.560	3.766	.240***	8.30***

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

[a] D is the maximum absolute discrepancy between the two cumulative proportion distributions. Significance levels are for a 2-tailed, 2-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of differences between the two distributions.

the health advice items, we had intended that some of the items would be contradictory, and that respondents would report on the usual or modal advice they received. For example, respondents were asked if the advice they *usually get* included "get medical advice as soon as possible" and "wait and see what happens," and we wanted to compare respondents receiving "act now" and "delay" advice from their social networks. In the TC sample, many more respondents endorsed both kinds of items, and some respondents indicated as many as five kinds of advice. As in the analysis of the attitude items reported above, this response difference between the two modes of interviewing suggests greater acquiescence in the telephone interviewing condition. On the other hand, it may be that the aim of eliciting the usual or dominant kind of advice was communicated more successfully in the face-to-face situation.

Discussion

We found that the telephone comparison sample had more missing data on family income, more acquiescence, evasiveness, and extremeness response bias, and more and somewhat contradictory answers to checklist questions. These are differences in response style rather than in item content (Jackson and Messick, 1958). For several reasons, we can probably rule out sampling fluctuations as an explanation for these response style differences between the samples. Except for the mean differences on family income (which is equivocal in view of the missing-data differences on the same question), we found no demographic differences between the samples. Also, while the attitude items yielded ample evidence for response style differences between samples, observed differences in attitude content were of marginal significance and were not robust under weighting.

These differences seem to indicate that the quality of the data obtained over the telephone was not as good as that obtained in the face-to-face situation, perhaps because TC respondents were insufficiently motivated, or were not working hard enough during the interview. There may be a special problem in telephone interviewing—that of motivating people to exert the effort required to play the respondent role (Cannell et al., 1977). Other researchers have also found poorer data quality with telephone interviews. For example, Groves (1977) found more respondent suspicion in telephone interviews, higher refusal rates, less detailed information in response to open-ended questions, and more evasiveness to sensitive questions. Yaffe et al. (1978) also found lower accuracy of reporting in telephone interviews, for their urban Baltimore sample, though not for their more rural Washington County sample.

Groves (1979) also found response bias differences between the telephone and household samples, on both income and attitude scale questions. The biases showed up as differential preferences or "sensitivity" for the response categories of the scales. He called attention to interviewers, interviewees, and questions as sources of the observed differences—which pretty well exhausts the potential sources, except perhaps for purely technical matters like voice-quality transmission.

As in Groves's research, it is not clear which of these sources is really responsible for the observed differences. We have characterized the biases as "response styles," and the words "acquiescence," "extremeness," and "evasiveness" seem to imply interviewee traits that are differentially elicited by the modes. Singer (1979) has even suggested that telephone respondents might be more acquiescent, since they agreed to a mode of interviewing which is easier to refuse than a face-to-face interview. The observed differences could be partly due to interviewer differences, however, since we know that the interviewers did not like the telephone mode as well as the face-to-face mode, and also that interviewer differences and expectations can affect responses (Singer and Kohnke-Aguirre, 1979; Sudman et al., 1977). Finally, despite our intentions, question formats could not be made completely identical for the two modes, since flash cards can present response options simultaneously in the face-to-face situation, but the same options must be presented serially over the telephone. Groves suggested that research might focus on adapting the questions to the telephone. Such research would concentrate less on comparing telephone and face-to-face interviewing and more on comparing alternate ways of asking questions on the telephone. On-line monitoring and computer-assisted telephone interviewing provide more control over the interviewing process than ever before, as well as more opportunities to make these comparisons experimentally and in the laboratory (Singer, 1979).

References

Berkanovic, E.
1980 "The health belief model, health orientations, and the decision to seek medical care." Manuscript in preparation, School of Public Health, University of California, Los Angeles.

Bushery, J. M., C. D. Cowan, and L. R. Murphy
1978 "Experiments in telephone-personal visit surveys." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Statistical Association, San Diego, California, August 1978.

Cannell, C. F., and F. Fowler
1965 "Comparison of hospitalization reporting in three survey procedures." Vital and Health Statistics, PHS, Publication No. 1000, Series 2, No. 8. Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office.

Cannell, C. F., L. Oksenberg, and J. M. Converse
1977 Experiments in Interviewing Techniques: Field Experiments in Health Reporting, 1971–77. NCHSR Research Report Series, DHEW Publication No. (HRA) 78–3204. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

Colombotos, J.
1969 "Personal versus telephone interviews: Effect on responses." Public Health Reports 84:773–81.

Fleishman, E., and M. Berk
1979 "Survey of interviewer attitudes toward selected methodological issues in the national medical care expenditure survey." Paper presented at the Third Biennial Conference on Health Survey Research and Methods, Reston, Virginia, May 1979.

Groves, R. M.
1977 "An experimental comparison of national telephone and personal interview surveys." Unpublished manuscript, Survey Research Center, University of Michigan.

1979 "Actors and questions in telephone and personal interview surveys." Public Opinion Quarterly 43:233–44.

Hochstim, J. R.

1967 "A critical comparison of three strategies of collecting data from households." Journal of the American Statistical Association 62:976–89.

Jackson, D. M., and S. Messick

1958 "Content and style in personality assessment." Psychological Bulletin 55:243–52.

Jordan, L. A.

1977 "The use of covariance structure analysis for the examination of acquiescence and other response style issues in faceted test data." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The City University of New York.

Kirscht, J. P., M. H. Becker, and J. P. Eveland

1976 "Psychological and social factors as predictors of medical behavior." Medical Care 14:422–31.

Kish, L.

1965 Survey Sampling. New York: Wiley.

Klecka, W. R., and A. J. Tuchfarber, Jr.

1978 "Random digit dialing: A comparison to personal surveys." Public Opinion Quarterly 42:105–14.

Locander, W., S. Sudman, and N. Bradburn

1976 "An investigation of interview method, threat and response." Journal of the American Statistical Association 71:269–75.

Reeder, L. G.

1976 Recent Literature Concerning the Use of the Telephone in Survey Research. Los Angeles: Institute for Social Science Research, UCLA.

1977 "Summary and conclusions." Pp. 1–3 in L. G. Reeder (ed.), Advances in Health Survey Research Methods: Proceedings of a National Invitational Conference, 1975. NCHSR Research Proceedings Series, DHEW Publication No. (HRA) 77–3154. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

Robins, L. N.

1963 "The reluctant respondent." Public Opinion Quarterly 27:276–86.

Rogers, T. F.

1976 "Reinterviewing urban residents by telephone and in person: effects on responses." Public Opinion Quarterly 40:50–65.

Schmiedeskamp, J. U.

1962 "Reinterview by telephone." Journal of Marketing 26:28–34.

Siemiatycki, J.

1979 "A comparison of mail, telephone and home interview strategies for household health surveys." American Journal of Public Health 69:238–45.

Singer, E.

1979 "Telephone interviewing as a black box." Paper presented at the Third Biennial Conference on Health Survey Research Methods, Reston, Virginia, May 1979.

Singer, E., and Kohnke-Aquirre, L.

1979 "Interviewer expectations effects: a replication and extension." Public Opinion Quarterly 43:245–60.

Sudman, S., N. M. Bradburn, E. Blair, and C. Stocking
1977 "Modest expectations: the effects of interviewers' prior expectations on response." Sociological Methods and Research 6:177–82.

Sumner, J.
1978 The 1976 LAMAS Frame and Master Sample: Technical Description. Los Angeles: Institute for Social Science Research, UCLA.

Wiseman, F.
1972 "Methodological bias in public opinion surveys." Public Opinion Quarterly 36:105–08.

Yaffe, R., S. Shapiro, R. R. Fuchsberg, C. E. Rohde, and H. C. Corpeno
1978 "Medical economics survey-methods study: cost-effectiveness of alternative survey strategies." Medical Care 16:641–59.

The editors wish to express their appreciation to the following reviewers, who have generously contributed their time and skills to the *Public Opinion Quarterly* by refereeing manuscripts during 1979.

Charles Atkin
Bernard Barber
Allen H. Barton
Laurie J. Bauman
James R. Beniger
Ruth G. Bennett
George F. Bishop
Edward A. Blair
Robert T. Bower
Charles F. Cannell
George A. Comstock
Jean Converse
Barry P. Cook
Charles D. Cowan
Irving Crespi
Faye Crosby
W. Phillips Davison
James DeNardo
Don A. Dillman
Leonard Doob
Paul L. Erdos
Robert Ferber
Mark Fishman
Neil M. Ford
George Gerbner
Albert E. Gollin
Willis J. Goudy
Doris A. Graber
Oron J. Hale
Thomas A. Heberlein
Ole R. Holsti
Mary R. Jackman
Wesley H. Jones
Charles M. Judd
Ronald C. Kessler
Donald R. Kinder
Kurt Lang
Norman Luttbeg
Philip Meyer
J. Ronald Milavsky
Arthur H. Miller
Clyde Z. Nunn
Lois Oksenberg
Paul K. Perry
Stanley Presser
Theresa F. Rogers
Bernard Roshco
Irving Roshwalb
Naomi D. Rothwell
Bruce Russett
D. Garth Taylor
Owen T. Thornberry, Jr.
Alfred J. Tuchfarber
Gaye Tuchman
Edward Tufte
Kent D. Van Liere
Ben Zablocki

The Polls: Changing Attitudes and Policies Toward China

CONNIE DE BOER

A NUMBER of far-reaching changes have occurred inside China during recent years in the areas of administration, ideology, and economy. These developments, which also include such events as the fall of the "Gang of Four" and the new 10-year plan which aims at rapid modernization, are accompanied by a growing rapprochement between China and Western countries. Overtures have also been undertaken from the West. In 1971 China was admitted to the United Nations, in 1972 President Nixon visited China, and late in 1978 China was finally recognized by the United States. In addition, both parties have been seeking reciprocal trade relations.

All these changes are reflected in the public opinion with respect to China. Even the designation of China in the questions used in public opinion studies affords a striking illustration of the changing attitude toward China: In 1979 the name People's Republic of China is used, and there is reference to Communist China only in those cases where a distinction must be made from Taiwan in a question. Up to 1971 the only names used in the questions were China, Red China, and Communist China. All four of these designations were handled from 1971 to 1979—the period of transition. This pattern applies only to American opinion studies.

In France, IFOP used the name Chinese People's Republic as early as 1966, and in Great Britain the designation is usually just China (with the exception of the years 1962 and 1963).

The opinion surveys collected for this Polls section have for the most part been carried out in the United States. To allow comparisons to be made, materials have in some cases also been included from Great Britain, West Germany, the Netherlands, and France. The reason for this geographic restriction is that the changes in the American public opinion with respect to China are more spectacular than those in the countries of western Europe. Consider this example:

Regarding the entry of China into the United Nations, the percentage of advocates of this accession among the American public rose from 7 percent in 1954 to 45 percent in 1971. In Great Britain the percentage of supporters during roughly the same period remained more or less constant at about 50 percent.

Appreciation for China generally changed in the United States during the period 1967–1979 from emphatically negative to a positive attitude. China's war with Vietnam, which broke out after the diplomatic recognition of

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University
Published by Elsevier North Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/80/0044-267/$1.75

China, deflected the trend somewhat and the Chinese image in the United States was again impaired. But diplomatic recognition of China is nevertheless supported by an ample majority of the American public. High hopes are placed in the expected growth of trade with China. Disapproval is only felt for the effects which the diplomatic recognition of China has or may have upon the relations between the United States and Taiwan.

Our sincere thanks go to the following institutions for their ready permission to publish the results of surveys conducted by them:

AIPO—American Institute for Public Opinion, USA
CBS—CBS News, USA
DMS—Institut für Demoskopie, Allensbach, West Germany
Gallup International
Harris—ABC News–Harris Survey, USA
IFOP—Institut Français d'Opinion Publique, France
NIPO—Netherlands Instituut voor de Publieke Opinie, Netherlands
SOC—Social Surveys (Gallup Poll) Ltd., Great Britain
Veldkamp—Veldkamp Marktonderzoek BV, Netherlands

All data are based on nationwide representative samples of adults. The data indicated with the research results are consistently those on which the polls were published. Breakdowns are available when the table is marked with an asterisk. Those interested in these data may apply to: The Polls Archives, Weteringschans 100–02, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Changing Attitudes Toward China

USA—CBS: *How would you rate your feelings toward different countries? Are your feelings toward [read country] generally favorable, generally unfavorable, or neutral?* (Jan 1979)

	Favorable	*Neutral*	*Unfavorable*	*No Opinion*
Mainland China	26%	44%	24%	6%
Russia	15	38	41	6

USA—AIPO: *How far up or down the scale would you rate China?*

	1967	*May 1972**	*1973**
+5	—	3%	6%
+4	—		4
+3	1%	20	12
+2	2		10
+1	2		17
−1	5	25	10
−2	4		6
−3	7		7
−4	8	46	5
−5	67		15

USA—Harris: *As far as you are concerned, do you feel that [read list] is a close ally of the U.S., is friendly but not a close ally, is not firendly but not an enemy, or is an enemy of the U.S.?*

	Close Ally	Friendly	Not Friendly	Enemy	Not Sure
The Soviet Union					
1976	1%	20%	39%	30%	10%
1979	3	21	38	27	11
The People's Republic of China					
1976	1%	22%	43%	25%	9%
1979	6	45	23	9	17

USA—CBS: *Do you think that right now the United States government is more favorable towards Russia, more favorable towards China, or is our policy evenhanded towards these two countries?* (Mar 1979)

Russia	10%
China	34
Evenhanded	37
No opinion	19

Great Britian—SOC: *Do you think that Britian's relationship with these countries is too close, not close enough, or about right?*

	Mar 1967	June 1978	Jan 1979	July 1979
Russia				
Too close	8%	15%	12%	9%
Not close enough	37	26	27	34
About right	41	41	43	45
Don't know	14	19	18	13
China				
Too close	9	8	7	9
Not close enough	34	29	34	36
About right	28	38	38	38
Don't know	29	25	21	18
USA				
Too close	25	12	11	15
Not close enough	13	16	14	17
About right	50	60	62	60
Don't know	12	12	13	9

France—IFOP: *Which opinion: good or bad, or neither of these, do you have of the Chinese People's Republic?* (Nov 1966)

Good	11%
Neither good nor bad	24
Bad	32
No answer	33

Netherlands—NIPO and Veldkamp: *Would you please look at this list and tell me which words, in your opinion, describe the Chinese people best? Select as many as you wish. Which words do you choose?*

	NIPO			*Veldkamp*
	1948	*1966*	*1968*	*1973*
Peace-loving	9%	4%	3%	16%
Hardworking	12	44	35	64
Progressive	4	23	18	44
Practical	3	10	10	18
Generous	2	4	2	3
Intelligent	7	15	8	19
Self-possessed	9	19	10	25
Brave	9	17	17	23
Conceited	2	5	6	5
Domineering	2	47	40	30
Backward	20	23	22	12
Cruel	12	37	34	16
No answer	54	12	17	—
	m	m	m	m

(m = multiple answers)

Admittance of China as a Member of the UN

USA—AIPO: *Do you think that Communist China should or should not be admitted as a member of the United Nations?*

	Should	*Should Not*	*No Opinion*
1950	11%	58%	31%
July 1954	7	78	15
Aug 1954	8	79	13
1956	11	74	15
1957	13	70	17
1958	17	66	17
Oct 1961	18	65	17
Feb 1964	15	71	14
Apr 1966	25	55	20
Feb 1969	33	54	13
Oct 1970	35	49	16
May 1971	45	38	17

Great Britain—SOC: *Do you think China [Red China, in 1962 and 1963] should or should not be admitted as a member of the United Nations?*

		Should	*Should Not*	*Don't Know*
(BIPO)	June 1953	52%	21%	27%
(SOC)	Oct 1962	45	34	21
	Sep 1963	48	23	29
	Dec 1964	54	13	33
	Sep 1965	41	19	40
	Oct 1966	49	24	27
	Sep 1967	47	25	28
	Feb 1968	54	23	23
	Feb 1970	45	22	33
	Apr 1970	42	24	34
	Sep 1970	47	26	26
	Dec 1970	51	23	26
	May 1971	54	20	26
	July 1971	59	16	25

West Germany—DMS: *The United Nations wants to organize a vote before the end of the year on whether the People's Republic of China, or Red China, should or should not be admitted to the United Nations. At this time, Nationalist China, or Formosa, is the only representative of China in the United Nations. You see here three views on this question. Which of these would you be in favor of?* (Oct/Nov 1971*)

I am in favor of the People's Republic of Red China being admitted to the United Nations and of Nationalist China remaining a member of the UN.	49%
I am in favor of the People's Republic of China being admitted to the UN, to take the place of Nationalist China, which should then no longer be a member of the UN.	13%
I am in favor of Nationalist China remaining the only representative of China in the UN, and of the People's Republic of China not being admitted to the UN.	9%
Undecided, no opinion	29%

Diplomatic Recognition of the People's Republic of China

USA—Harris: *It has been argued that we could deal with the People's Republic of China (Communist China) better if we officially recognized them. This would allow us to have an ambassador in China as we have in other Communist countries. Do you favor or oppose official recognition of Red China?*

	Favor	*Oppose*	*Not Sure*
1966	43%	33%	24%
1967	41	34	25
1968	39	44	17
1971	55	20	25
1977	62	18	20
1978	66	25	9

The United States and the People's Republic of China have agreed to full diplomatic recognition of each other, including the exchange of ambassadors. Do you favor or oppose our official recognition of the People's Republic of China? (Jan 1979)

	Favor	*Oppose*	*Not Sure*
Total	60%	27%	13%
Age: 18–29	66	24	10
30–49	65	25	10
50–64	52	32	16
65 and over	50	28	22
Education: 8th grade	34	37	29
High school	55	31	14
College	73	20	7

All in all, do you feel that President Carter, in breaking our diplomatic ties with Taiwan, gave up a reasonable amount to get agreement with the Chinese, or that he gave up too much? (Mar 1979)

Gave up a reasonable amount	38%
Gave up too much	45
Not sure	17

As you look back on it now, do you think we were right or wrong to have agreed to official diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China? (Mar 1979)

More right	62%
More wrong	22
Neither (vol.)	2
Not sure	14

Now let me ask you about some of the specific parts of the U.S.-Chinese agreement to diplomatic recognition. Do you approve or disapprove of the U.S. agreeing that [read list] (Jan 1979)

	Approve	*Disapprove*	*Not Sure*
We would not sell military arms to the People's Republic of China	72%	21%	7%
We would withdraw official diplomatic recognition of the Nationalist government in Taiwan, but would continue to trade with them	45	44	11
We would continue to sell military arms to the Nationalist government in Taiwan	43	47	10
By 1980, we will cancel our defensive alliance with the Nationalist government in Taiwan	32	52	16
We recognize that Taiwan is part of mainland China, which is controlled by the Communists	29	57	14

Gallup International—Australia: *Do you think Australia should or should not recognize the Peking Government?*

	Recognize	*Don't Recognize*	*Undecided*
1951	22%	46%	32%
1958	41	34	25
1964	35	37	28
1969	47	33	20

Do you think Australia should or should not recognize the Communist government in Peking as the Government of China?

1970	49%	35%	16%
1971	56	19	25

USA—Harris: *Should we end our defensive alliance with the Nationalist government on Taiwan*

	1976	*1977*	*1978*
Continue defensive alliance	65%	57%	64%
End defensive alliance	6	12	19
Not sure	29	31	17

USA—CBS: *Do you think that Jimmy Carter should have pushed for closer ties with Communist China even though that meant breaking off relations with the Chinese Nationalists on Taiwan?*

	Should	*Should Not*	*No Opinion*
Jan 1977	28%	42%	30%
Dec 1978	27	45	28
Jan 1979	32	46	22

USA—Harris: *Our country has officially recognized the Nationalist Chinese government in Taiwan for many years. We also have a defensive treaty alliance with that government and sell them military weapons, such as warplanes. Communist China feels strongly that the United States cannot recognize the Nationalist Chinese on Taiwan and also have normal relations with the Communist Chinese government. Should we continue our diplomatic recognition of Taiwan, or should we withdraw that recognition in order to have better relations with Communist China?*

	1977	*1978*
Continue recognition	62%	66%
Withdraw recognition	11	19
Not sure	27	15

USA—AIPO: *Some people feel that establishing relations with the People's Republic of China was an important enough reason to break off diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Other people feel that it was wrong to end relations with Taiwan, in order to establish relations with the People's Republic of China. Which position comes closest to your own view?* (Jan. 1979)

Wrong	47%
Important enough	35
No opinion	18

Trade with the People's Republic of China

USA—Harris: *Would you like to see [read list] happen or not?* (Oct. 1977)

	Like	*Not Like*	*Not Sure*
An agreement between the U.S. and China on control of nuclear weapons	79%	10%	11%
More exchange of cultural missions between the two countries	76	12	12
Increased trade of sports teams between the two countries	75	13	12
Increased trade in nonstrategic goods between the U.S. and the People's Republic of China	64	21	15

Would you like to see [read list] happen or not? (Sep. 1978)

	Like	*Not Like*	*Not Sure*
Increased trade in nonstrategic goods between the U.S. and Communist China	62%	30%	8%
The U.S. work together with Communist China as a force against Russia	20	71	9
The sale of U.S. electronic military defense systems to Communist China	11	81	8

Now let me ask you, would you like to see the U.S. trade more with [China], less, or about as much as it does now?

Mar. 1977				*Mar. 1979*			
More	*Less*	*As Much*	*Not Sure*	*More*	*Less*	*As Much*	*Not Sure*
30%	25%	33%	12%	40%	24%	28%	8%

Great Britain—SOC: *Would you like to see every effort made to increase trade with Communist China or are you against such a policy?*

	Sep 1963	*Jan 1979*
Increase trade	43%	58%
Against policy	26	21
Don't know	31	21

30 A0610-1

POPQAE 44(3) 287–444 (1980)
ISSN 0033-362X

Public Opinion Quarterly

TELEVISION'S EFFECTS

The Fruits of Cultivation Analysis: A Reexamination of Some Effects of Television Watching — *Michael Hughes*

Reactions to Sex on Television: An Exploratory Study — *Joyce N. Sprafkin, L. Theresa Silverman, and Eli A. Rubinstein*

Children's Dispositions Toward Proprietary Drugs and the Role of Television Drug Advertising — *John R. Rossiter and Thomas S. Robertson*

Adolescents, Television, and Support for Government — *David R. Berman and John A. Stookey*

IMAGES AND PERCEPTIONS

Images of Social Groups: Categorical or Qualified? — *Mary R. Jackman and Mary Scheuer Senter*

Citizen Perceptions of Channels for Urban Service Advocacy — *Elaine B. Sharp*

RATIO SCALES

Direct Magnitude Estimation Scales in Public Opinion Surveys — *Diana Stover Tillinghast*

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

CURRENT RESEARCH • NEWS AND NOTES
BOOK REVIEWS

FALL 1980

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

The Public Opinion Quarterly

ORGAN OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH
EDITORIALLY SPONSORED BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION

ALLEN BARTON W. PHILLIPS DAVISON HARVEY C. MANSFIELD
ROBERT K. MERTON FREDERICK T. C. YU

Editor: ELEANOR SINGER *Managing Editor:* INA C. JAEGER
Department Editors: *Editorial Assistants:*
PHILIP A. HARDING, *News and Notes* LAURA VALENSTEIN
MARC B. GLASSMAN, *Book Reviews* NANCY JALET

EDITORIAL BOARD

LEO BOGART
STEVEN R. BROWN
ROBERT O. CARLSON
STEVEN H. CHAFFEE
STEVEN M. COHEN
PHILIP E. CONVERSE
JAMES A. DAVIS
MARTIN R. FRANKEL
HERBERT J. GANS
NORVAL D. GLENN
JOHN HAMMOND
EUGENE L. HARTLEY
MATHEW HAUCK
HERBERT H. HYMAN
ELIHU KATZ
JOSEPH T. KLAPPER
HERBERT E. KRUGMAN
EVERETT LADD
KENNETH C. LAND
GLADYS ENGEL LANG
NATHAN MACCOBY
HERBERT McCLOSKY
WILLIAM J. McGUIRE
JOHN P. ROBINSON
HOWARD SCHUMAN
SEYMOUR SUDMAN
CAROL H. WEISS
CHARLES R. WRIGHT

JUNE CHRIST, *AAPOR Representative*

Volume #44, 4 issues (1980)

© 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University.

Published quarterly by Elsevier North Holland, Inc. New York. Second-class postage paid at New York, New York and at additional mailing offices. Institutional subscription price per year $25.00 (Volume #44, 1980). Individual subscription for subscriber's own personal use $13.00 (payment must accompany order). Foreign subscribers must add an additional $4.00 per volume for postage (surface mail) and handling, $10.00 for air mail to Europe and Canada, $16.00 for air mail outside the U.S., Canada, or Europe.

Mail orders and direct subscription information to:
Michael Torzewski
Subscription Department
Elsevier North Holland, Inc.
52 Vanderbilt Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Single copy and back volume information furnished upon written request. Claims for missing issues can be honored only up to three months from date of issue. Indexed by Public Affairs Information Services, Social Sciences Index, United States Political Science Documents, and Combined Retrospective Index Sets (CRIS).

PUBLICATION NUMBER 449380

Editorial Office: Journalism Building, Columbia University 116th Street and Broadway, New York, New York 10027
Business, Subscriptions, Back Issues: Elsevier North Holland, Inc. 52 Vanderbilt Avenue New York, New York 10017
AAPOR: Post Office Box 17, Princeton, New Jersey 08540
Subscribers and members of AAPOR are urged to notify the Subscription Office as soon as possible of changes of address. In doing so, give the old as well as the new address.

PUBLISHED BY ELSEVIER NORTH HOLLAND, INC.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

The Public Opinion Quarterly

VOLUME 44 FALL NUMBER 3

The Fruits of Cultivation Analysis: A Reexamination of Some Effects of Television Watching *Michael Hughes* 287

Reactions to Sex on Television: An Exploratory Study *Joyce N. Sprafkin, L. Theresa Silverman, and Eli A. Rubinstein* 303

Children's Dispositions Toward Proprietary Drugs and the Role of Television Drug Advertising *John R. Rossiter and Thomas S. Robertson* 316

Adolescents, Television, and Support for Government *David R. Berman and John A. Stookey* 330

Images of Social Groups: Categorical or Qualified? *Mary R. Jackman and Mary Scheuer Senter* 341

Citizen Perceptions of Channels for Urban Service Advocacy *Elaine B. Sharp* 362

Direct Magnitude Estimation Scales in Public Opinion Surveys *Diana Stover Tillinghast* 377

CURRENT RESEARCH

The Perils of Partisan Recall *Howard L. Reiter* 385

Effects of Telephone Canvassing on Turnouts and Preferences: A Field Experiment *William C. Adams and Dennis J. Smith* 389

Nonresponse in Mail Surveys: Access Failure or Respondent Resistance *Carol P. Sosdian and Laure M. Sharp* 396

The Ambiguities of "Religious Preference" in Survey Research—A Methodological Note *Wade Clark Roof* 403

COMMENTS AND LETTERS 408

NEWS AND NOTES *Philip A. Harding* 414

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH 419

BOOK REVIEWS

Herbert H. Hyman and Charles R. Wright, *Education's Lasting Influence on Values* *Milton Rokeach* 436

Robert N. Pierce, *Keeping the Flame: Media and Government in Latin America* *John T. McNelly* 439

Charles F. Cannell, Lois Oksenberg, and Jean M. Converse, eds., *Experiments in Interviewing Techniques: Field Experiments in Health Reporting, 1971–1977* *Eleanor Singer* 440

Rutger Lindahl, *Broadcasting Across Borders: A Study on the Role of Propaganda in External Broadcasts* *Tapio Varis* 442

◆

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

Authors should submit two copies of their articles and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope if they wish them returned. Bibliographic references, footnotes, and tables should be typed to conform to the printed style of this journal. Authors are urged to consult recent issues before submitting articles.

Upon acceptance of an article by the journal, the author(s) will be asked to transfer copyright in the article to the publisher. This transfer will insure the widest possible dissemination of information under the U.S. Copyright Law.

The PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY is hospitable to all points of view, provided that the material presented will help to illuminate problems of communication and public opinion. The American Association for Public Opinion Research assumes responsibility only for material signed by an officer of the Association in his official capacity. Statements of fact and opinion are made on the responsibility of the authors alone and do not represent the views of the editors.

The PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY has been registered with the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc. Consent is given for copying of articles for personal or internal use, or for the personal or internal use of specific clients. This consent is given on the condition that the copier pay through the Center the per-copy fee stated in the code on the first page of each article for copying beyond that permitted by the U.S. Copyright Law. If no code appears on an article, the author has not given broad consent to copy and permission to copy must be obtained directly from the author. All articles published prior to 1978 may be copied for a per-copy fee of $1.00, also payable through the Center. This consent does not extend to other kinds of copying, such as for general distribution, resale, advertising and promotional purposes, or for creating new collective works.

The Fruits of Cultivation Analysis: A Reexamination of Some Effects of Television Watching

MICHAEL HUGHES

In a series of articles and reports published in the *Journal of Communication* and in reports issued by The Annenberg School of Communications Gerbner and others claim that heavy television watching cultivates conceptions of reality in viewers which are consistent with the world presented in television dramas (Gerbner and Gross, 1976; Gerbner et al., 1977a: 1977b; 1978a; 1978b). After carefully documenting the fact that much of the content of television programs involves violence, Gerbner and his associates argue that persons who spend many hours each day watching television are exposed to such a heavy barrage of violence and crime-related imagery that they come to view the world as more violent and more dominated by criminal concerns than it really is. As a result, such persons will tend to have inaccurate perceptions about the amount and kinds of crimes committed in the real world, to inaccurately

---

Abstract A set of items from the General Social Survey for 1975 and 1977 measuring alienation and fear of walking near one's home at night, which were claimed by Gerbner et al. (1978a) to be related to heavy television watching, are reanalyzed with simultaneous controls for age, sex, race, income, education, hours worked per week outside the home, church attendance, membership in voluntary associations, and population size. The effects of television watching on responses to these items which were claimed by Gerbner et al. are largely absent in this analysis. Items in the same data set used by Gerbner et al., but not included in their analysis are analyzed using the technique above, with results that fail to support the contention of Gerbner and his associates. The implications of these findings for a cultivation theory of television effects are discussed.

Michael Hughes is Assistant Professor of Sociology, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The author wishes to thank Richard A. Peterson, Walter R. Gove, Cathleen Burnett, Ricky McCarty, Michael R. Wood, Jerome B. Price, and two anonymous reviewers for their comments on an earlier draft. Also helpful were conversations with Anthony Oberschall, G. Russell Carpenter, John Ryan, Lynn Ballew, and Christian D. Hughes, and research assistance provided by Eileen Covey and Timothy J. Carter.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University

Published by Elsevier North-Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/80/0044-287/$1.75

estimate the number of persons engaged in law enforcement, to trust others less, to become alienated, and to experience an unwarranted amount of generalized fear, reflected in taking excessive precautions against violence and in being afraid to walk alone at night in their own neighborhoods. Furthermore, in their 1978a and 1978b analyses Gerbner et al. suggest that since television violence is so frequent and is performed by many characters in a general context of moral approval, violence will be seen as appropriate behavior in some conventional situations.

Rather than asserting that television watching has direct effects, Gerbner and Gross (1976) and Gerbner et al. (1977a; 1977b; 1978a; 1978b) argue that it "cultivates" a symbolic structure, which is then used by viewers to interpret everyday reality. To investigate this phenomenon, they employ "cultivation analysis," which they claim is superior to other forms of analysis (particularly experimental designs) since it is the relatively long-term effects on cognitive structure, through which individuals perceive and interpret experience, which are at issue, not just the creation of some transient opinion, feeling, or attitude (Gerbner and Gross, 1976:175; Gerbner et al., 1978a: 193–94; 1978b:48–49). Cultivation analysis is not really a special technique, but rather a simple research strategy which flows directly from a theory that assumes that heavy exposure to cultural imagery shapes conceptions of reality. In their application of cultivation analysis, Gerbner and his associates first determine the "television answer" (i.e., the answer "slanted in the direction of the world of television" [Gerbner and Gross, 1976:191; also see Gerbner et al., 1978a:195; 1978b:50–51]) to a question posed by an interviewer as part of a survey. If subsequent analyses show that television watching is positively related to giving the "television answer," then evidence of cultivation is found. In the analyses of misperception of crime and law enforcement activities, Gerbner et al. (1977a; 1977b) treat television watching as a continuous variable and use partial correlation techniques (controlling a limited number of extraneous variables) to assess cultivation effects, while in the analysis of so-called behavioral effects (i.e., alienation, fear of walking alone at night, and approval of violence) Gerbner et al. (1977a; 1977b; 1978a; 1978b) compare heavy watchers with light watchers, controlling confounding variables one at a time.

In none of the analyses of correlates of television watching in the studies cited above do Gerbner and his associates present analyses which both (1) provide controls for the available variables which might reasonably be expected to produce spurious relationships between television watching and the dependent variables, and (2) control for such extraneous variables simultaneously.

The purpose of the present study is twofold: first, to reanalyze the same data used by Gerbner et al. (1978a) from the General Social Surveys (GSS) for 1975 and 1977 (Davis, 1978a), and to include the analysis of relevant items ignored by Gerbner and his associates, with simultaneous controls for extraneous variables, in order to reassess the assertions of Gerbner and his associates about some of the correlates of television watching; and second, to evaluate their theoretical position concerning cultivation effects in the light of analyses mentioned above, and to offer a critique of their determination of "television answers."

The Gerbner et al. (1978a) Analysis

The 1977 GSS asked the question: "Is there any area right around here—that is, within a mile—where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?" The alternatives were "yes" and "no." Gerbner et al. (1978a) find that heavy watchers are more likely than light watchers to say yes. The 1977 GSS also asked three questions tapping frequently measured dimensions of anomie or alienation: (1) "In spite of what some people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better" (agree or disagree); (2) "It's hardly fair to bring a child into the world with the way things look for the future" (agree or disagree); and (3) "Most public officials are not really interested in the problems of the average man" (agree or disagree). The sole question from the 1975 GSS which is analyzed in detail in the Gerbner et al. (1978a) analysis is the question, "Do you think it will be best for the future of this country if we take an active part in world affairs, or if we stay out of world affairs?" (take active part or stay out). Heavy watchers of television are more likely than light watchers to agree with the alienation items and to report a preference for staying out of world affairs. All these findings were interpreted as being in the direction of the "television answer."

These findings hold up after controls are introduced for age, sex, and education.

There are two problems with the way this is done. First, age, sex, and education are controlled one variable at a time, not simultaneously—a technique which results in the presentation of three underspecified three-variable models (i.e., one dependent variable, one independent variable, and one control variable). Second, it does not seem reasonable that these three variables exhaust the possibilities of variables available in the GSS which may be responsible for spurious relationships between television watching and the dependent variables in the Gerbner et al. analysis. Other studies of television watching have shown that race is related to television watching (i.e., blacks watch more [Bogart, 1972a; 1972b:377]). It is also true that race is related to such things as alienation, and it is possible that it is related to fear of walking alone at night in one's neighborhood. The same is true for income, which can provide opportunities for cultural exposure both in and away from the home, and constrain the amount of time available to watch television. Obviously the number of hours worked outside the home severely limits the opportunities to watch television and is also probably related to alienation and to a lack of fear of walking alone at night in one's neighborhood (this is, of course, what cognitive dissonance theory would predict). For similar reasons it may also be that television watching and the dependent variables considered are related to church attendance, number of voluntary associations one belongs to, and the population size of the place where one lives.

It should be noted that even after controlling for all the relevant social and demographic variables, the finding of a statistically significant relationship between television watching and fear of victimization and alienation would not necessarily indicate that fear and alienation were produced by exposure to television. It is just as plausible that persons who are fearful and alienated are more likely to stay at home and watch television (this may be particularly apt to occur in high crime areas; see Doob and MacDonald [1979:172–74] and the comment by Gerbner et al. [1979]). However, such statistically significant relationships in cross sectional data would at least be consistent with the cultivation perspective.

The Reanalysis

CONTROL VARIABLES

As reported in Gerbner et al. (1978a), in 1975 and 1977, the National Opinion Research Center General Social Survey (Davis, 1978b) included the question: "On the average day, about how many hours do you personally watch television?" Answers were coded into actual hours watched from zero to 24. This question was also asked in the 1978 GSS. In any analysis of the relationship between television watching and some dependent variable, if a potential control variable can be shown to be related to television watching and potentially related to the dependent variable in a causal way, then it should be included as a control. Accordingly, an analysis was done to determine the importance of the variables identified above as control variables. Though the focus of the analysis and discussion to follow is limited to the 1975 and 1977 GSS, the analysis of determinants of television watching includes data from the 1978 GSS. Data from all three samples were combined and run as a single data set.[1] Such a procedure allows for a more definitive statement concerning effects of these variables on television watching, since increasing sample size reduces the impact of measurement error and sampling fluctuations. Running the data year-by-year produces the same substantive results, although the pattern of strength of the independent variables changes. The results of this complete three-year analysis are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 gives the mean number of hours of television watched per day by age, sex, race, income, education, hours worked (per week), church attendance, number of voluntary associations, and size of place. For each variable there are two columns of means. The first column presents the zero-order relationship between the variable and hours of television watched. The second column presents the means for each category of the variable after adjusting them for the effects of all the other variables in the table. The statistics *eta* and *beta* measure strength of association. Multiple Classification Analysis (Andrews et al., 1969) was used to simultaneously adjust the effects of each variable for all the other variables in the table.[2]

The relationship between sex and television watching is fairly strong before controls, but disappears afterwards, and this disappearance is accounted for by the variable of hours worked per week (Hughes and Peterson, 1980). Sex remains strong until this variable is introduced, suggesting that women watch TV more than men because they are likely to work fewer hours outside the home than men. Race is still a fairly strong predictor of television watching even after controls are added for employment, socioeconomic status, and other variables. Consistent with the findings of other investigators (Bogart, 1972a; 1972b; see review in Comstock et al., 125–28), black people watch an average of approximately three-quarters of an hour more television per day than white people. Education is related to television watching in a generally negative direction, but its predictive power is reduced by controls. Age is related to television watching before controls in a curvilinear fashion, as has been reported in some other studies but not all (Bower, 1973:43; Comstock et al., 1978:92). However, after controls, age has almost a monotonic negative re-

---

[1] Sample procedures and characteristics are detailed in Davis (1978b).

[2] Since MCA allows for the possibility that the relationships are not monotonic, the lack of sign (+ or −) on the *etas* and *betas* does not indicate a positive relationship.

Table 1. Mean Hours of Television Watching Per Day by Categories of Control Variables, Unadjusted and Adjusted (N = 4,149)

	Unadjusted Mean	*Adjusted Mean*	*(N)*
Sex			
Male	2.67	2.91	(1,855)
Female	3.16	2.91	(2,294)
eta	.101*		
Beta		.000	
Race			
White	2.81	2.83	(3,712)
Black	3.73	3.59	(437)
eta	.130*		
Beta		.108*	
Education			
0–7	3.23	2.82	(326)
8	3.09	2.96	(332)
9–11	3.61	3.36	(756
12	2.99	3.06	(1,435)
13–15	2.53	2.58	(701)
16	2.14	2.44	(354)
17+	1.80	2.31	(245)
eta	.233*		
Beta		.150*	
Age			
18–24	3.38	3.28	(665)
25–34	2.81	2.99	(895)
35–44	2.61	2.87	(745)
45–54	2.57	2.75	(635)
55–64	2.86	2.84	(582)
65+	3.31	2.68	(627)
eta	.144*		
Beta		.088*	
Hours work per week			
0–9	3.61	3.54	(1,764)
10–29	2.71	2.68	(289)
30–39	2.47	2.48	(337)
40–49	2.41	2.43	(1,328)
50+	2.07	2.28	(431)
eta	.285*		
Beta		.256*	
Income			
0–3,999	3.74	3.20	(531)
4–6,999	3.26	2.91	(563)
7–9,999	3.16	3.04	(529)
10–14,999	2.86	2.92	(879)
15–24,999	2.60	2.84	(1,090)
25,000+	2.20	2.64	(539)
eta	.212*		
Beta		.071*	

Table 1. *(Continued)*

	Unadjusted Mean	*Adjusted Mean*	*(N)*
Number of memberships			
0	3.46	3.13	(1,122)
1	2.96	2.86	(1,152)
2	2.81	2.87	(722)
3	2.46	2.72	(504)
4+	2.33	2.81	(649)
eta	.187*		
beta		.066*	
Church attendance			
LT 1 a Year	3.13	3.10	(943)
A Few a Year	3.08	3.07	(1,083)
1–3 a Month	2.96	2.86	(682)
About 1 a Month	2.71	2.78	(1,121)
5+ Per Month	2.28	2.33	(320)
eta	.114*		
beta		.100*	
Size of place			
0–9,999	2.91	2.89	(1,667)
10–69,999	2.82	2.94	(1,269)
70–199,999	2.99	3.03	(437)
200–599,999	2.96	2.91	(361)
600,000+	3.06	2.79	(415)
eta	.035		
beta		.027	

SOURCE: NORC General Social Survey: 1975, 1977, and 1978 combined.
Significance Level: * $p < .05$.

lationship with television watching, suggesting that older persons watch more television than others for reasons associated with socioeconomic, social, and employment variables. Population size shows no relationship either before or after controls.

Opportunity (or time available) seems to have a strong impact on time spent in television watching. Hours worked per week is the strongest predictor of television watching both before and after controls. Number of memberships in voluntary associations is negatively related to television watching before controls, but its strength is cut dramatically with controls. However, the negative effect of church attendance, which is moderately strong as a predictor at the zero-order level, is reduced hardly at all with controls.

From this analysis, it appears that the exclusion of race, hours worked, and church attendance from the analysis by Gerbner et al. (1978a) may be a serious lapse, particularly since these variables may well be related to the dependent variables they use. It is also apparent that two weaker predictors of television watching, which Gerbner et al. did not include in their analysis, may also be confounding the relationship between television watching and dependent variables—income and number of voluntary associations.

REANALYSIS WITH SIMULTANEOUS CONTROLS FOR CONFOUNDING VARIABLES

Table 2 presents the results of an analysis of the relationship between television watching and the five variables analyzed by Gerbner et al. (1978a) from the 1975 and 1977 GSS. Television watching is coded in the same way as it was in the Gerbner et al. (1978a) analysis.

Table 2. Mean Scores on Items Analyzed in Gerbner et al. (1978a) by Hours of Television Watched (per day) Unadjusted, and Adjusted for Sex, Race, Education, Income, Age, Hours Worked (per week), Number of Memberships, Church Attendance, and Population Size

	Hours Watched Per Day				
	0–2	*3*	*4+*	*eta-beta*	*N*
(1) World affairs					
Unadj.	.311	.342	.466	.144*	(1,333)
Adj.	.342	.354	.413	.066*	
(2) Public officials					
Unadj.	.579	.693	.723	.139*	(1,313)
Adj.	.613	.686	.667	.066*	
(3) Lot of the average man					
Unadj.	.496	.625	.618	.125*	(1,312)
Adj.	.534	.619	.555	.066*	
(4) Child into the world					
Unadj.	.338	.404	.466	.113*	(1,325)
Adj.	.386	.378	.400	.015	
(5) Afraid to walk alone					
Unadj.	.419	.421	.475	.051	(1,362)
Adj.	.451	.419	.418	.032	

QUESTION WORDING AND CODES

(1) Do you think it will be best for the future of this country if we take an active part in world affairs, or if we stay out of world affairs: 1 = stay out, 0 = active part.

(2) Most public officials are not really interested in the problems of the average man. 1 = agree; 0 = disagree.

(3) In spite of what some people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better. 1 = agree; 0 = disagree.

(4) It's hardly fair to bring a child into the world with the way things look for the future. 1 = agree; 0 = disagree.

(5) Is there any area right around here—that is, within a mile—where you would be afraid to walk alone at night? 1 = yes; 0 = no.

Significance level: * $p < .05$.

For each variable, the unadjusted row gives the proportion (this is the mean for the variable after coding it 0 and 1) responding in the direction reported by Gerbner et al. (1978a) for each level of television watching (0, 1, 2 hours is "light;" 3 hours is "medium;" and 4 or more hours is "heavy"); the second row displays the same proportion (mean) after adjusting the relationship for the effects of sex, race, education, age, hours worked (per week), income, number of memberships, church attendance, and population size. As in Table 1, the *eta* and *beta* are measures of association. The sample size is in parentheses.[3]

Only one of the five relationships claimed by Gerbner et al. (1979a) holds up after controls. Three of the five show significant differences, but two of these three do not conform to the patterns which one would expect, given the assumptions of the cultivation perspective.

Fear of walking alone at night, the variable which bears most directly on the Gerbner et al. (1978a) hypothesis concerning television watching and the perception of environmental menace, reverses direction after controls, and while this relationship is not statistically significant, it suggests that those who watch television heavily are *less* likely to be afraid of walking alone at night in their neighborhoods. An inspection of the effects of control variables reveals that sex (*beta* = .386), age (*beta* = .101), and size of place (*beta* = .255) are extremely powerful predictors of fear of walking alone at night, and that television watching (*beta* = .033) is very weak by comparison. Doob and McDonald (1979:175), in a similar analysis, found that the relationship of television viewing to an environmental fear index of nine items (including one item virtually identical to the question from the GSS analyzed by Gerbner et al.) disappeared after controls were introduced for sex, age, crime rate, urban residence, radio news, newspaper reading, and the crime by urban interaction, and that sex, age, and crime rate were, with controls, very powerful predictors of environmental fear.

Analysis of the anomia items, which are somewhat more peripherally related to the claims of the cultivation perspective, does not yield findings entirely consistent with that perspective. The relationship of television watching with the item concerning the fairness of bringing a child into the world is not significant after controls. There is a .014 (i.e., 1.4 percent) difference between heavy and light watching. The question about the lot of the average man getting better or worse shows an apparently curvilinear relationship with television watching, with more similarity between heavy and light viewers than between either of these categories and moderate viewers. There is a .021 (2.1 percent) difference between heavy and light viewing. The relationship is significant not because of this difference, but because those in the medium category have a higher mean than those in the heavy and light categories. Only the anomia item concerning public officials' interest in the average man shows a relationship with television watching which is close to what Gerbner and his associates would predict, but even in this case, it is the moderate watchers who are the most "alienated," while cultivation theory would predict a monotonic relationship. There is a .054 (5.4 percent) gap between heavy and light watching, but a .073 (7.3 percent) gap between medium and light watching. The finding that a medium level of television watching is more "alienating" than either heavy or light viewing on two of these anomia items directly contradicts the cultivation prespective, which assumes that it is the heavy barrage of violent imagery on television (to which heavy viewers are more exposed than light viewers) which should make a difference. Of course, since these items both measure "alienation" and are thus correlated with one another, similar findings on both measures should not necessarily be interpreted as two independent disconfirmations.

---

[3] The present analysis reports on roughly 150 fewer respondents (depending on year and variable) than in the Gerbner et al. (1978a) analysis. This attrition is because some cases have data missing on the control variables. The variable which is responsible for the loss of the most cases is income.

The relationship between television watching and the item concerning U.S. participation in international affairs holds up precisely as claimed in the Gerbner et al. (1978a) analysis; however, the predictive power of television watching is reduced with controls. The substantive significance of this is discussed below.

ADDITIONAL ANALYSES OF ITEMS IGNORED BY GERBNER ET AL. (1978a)

The statistical analysis above suggests strongly that when one controls for relevant social and socioeconomic variables, the claims made by Gerbner and his associates (1978a) do not hold up. However, not controlling for relevant variables is not the only lapse in the analysis. Gerbner and his colleagues also failed to report relationships in the 1975 GSS and 1977 GSS (to which, I assume, they had access) of television watching to dependent variables directly related to violence, and to variables very similar to items they report on from other surveys. A look at the relationships of television watching to these variables, even at the zero-order level, suggests a very different conclusion regarding what television "cultivates" from that offered by Gerbner et al. (1978a). Indeed, these "behavioral" correlates of television watching appear to be incongruent with the violent imagery on television which Gerbner et al. (1977a; 1977b; 1978a; 1978b) have ably documented.

In the 1975 GSS two questions were asked concerning the appropriateness of violence, while two other questions from the 1977 GSS concern the ownership of firearms. The questions on violence are, "Are there any situations you can imagine in which you would approve of a man striking an adult male stranger?" (yes or no); and, "Are there any situations you can imagine in which you would approve of a policeman striking an adult male citizen?" (yes or no). The first question is similar to a question asked of children and reported on in Gerbner et al. as indicating that children who watch a great deal of television are likely to approve violence. This question was: "It's almost always right to hit someone if you are mad at them" (agree or disagree). Admittedly, there are differences in wording, but the similarities are quite striking.

A question in the 1977 GSS asked, "Do you happen to have in your home any guns or revolvers?" (yes or no); if the answer was yes, they were asked (among other questions): "Is it a pistol?" (yes or no). In their paper Gerbner et al. (1978a) report on a question from the 1976 American National Election Study by the Center for Political Studies concerning precautions persons have taken in order to be safe from crime. Persons reported whether or not they "kept a gun for purposes of protection." Such behavior was found by Gerbner et al. (1978a) to be related to television watching. Again, admittedly the GSS questions are not exactly the same as that reported on by Gerbner et al. (1978a), but the similarities do appear to make these items relevant.

The relationship between television watching and these four items is presented in Table 3. At the zero-order level, those who watch television more are *less* likely to approve violence whether by a private citizen or by a policeman. The relationship for police violence is still significant with controls, although the relationship for private citizen violence becomes insignificant (stays in the same direction) after controls.

An analysis in Hughes and Peterson (1980) shows that race is an important control variable here. Black persons are both more likely to watch television, as reported above, and more likely not to approve violence (this is to be expected, as it is easily shown that in the United States black people are more likely to be victims of violence [Ennis, 1967:30; see also Nettler, 1978:87–96 for a review of victimization studies]). Controlling for race, therefore, reduces the original relationship between television watching and the disapproval

Table 3. Mean Scores on Items in the NORC GSS Not Analyzed by Gerbner et al. (1978a) by Hours of Television Watched (per day) Unadjusted, and Adjusted for Sex, Race, Education, Income, Age, Hours Worked (per week), Number of Memberships, Church Attendance, and Population Size

	Hours Watched Per Day				
	0–2	*3*	*4+*	*eta-beta*	*N*
(1) Man punch					
Unadj.	.721	.743	.649	.083*	(1,377)
Adj.	.714	.733	.665	.058	
(2) Police strike					
Unadj.	.783	.757	.661	.123*	(1,374)
Adj.	.765	.743	.697	.067*	
(3) Have guns or revolvers					
Unadj.	.519	.551	.503	.034	(1,354)
Adj.	.520	.534	.521	.011	
(4) Is it a pistol					
Unadj.	.220	.219	.220	.039	(1,351)
Adj.	.217	.209	.232	.038	

QUESTION WORDING AND CODES

(1) Are there any situations that you can imagine in which you would approve of a man punching an adult male stranger? 1 = yes; 0 = no.

(2) Are there any situations you can imagine in which you would approve of a policeman striking an adult male citizen? 1 = yes; 0 = no.

(3) Do you happen to have in your home any guns or revolvers? 1 = yes; 0 = no.

(4) (If respondent answered yes to the above) Is it a pistol? 1 = yes; 0 = no (+ those who have no guns or revolvers).

Significance level: * $p < .05$.

of violence. Analysis of these items in the 1978 GSS produces nearly the same results (Hughes and Peterson, 1980). Analysis of the other two variables concerning ownership of guns (in general) and pistols shows that there is no relationship with television watching either before or after controls.

Unfortunately, the question constituting both the dependent and independent variables in the Gerbner et al. (1978a) analysis concerning firearms differs from the questions in the GSS. This raises difficult problems of interpretation. Nonetheless, the data from the GSS do show that heavy television watching does not seem to "cultivate" a general tendency to possess firearms.

The "Television Answer" and Cultivation Theory

Gerbner et al. (1977a; 1977b; 1978a; 1978b) argue that the content of television programs is so violent that persons who watch frequently have a picture of the real world which is distorted in the direction of the violent world of television. Such persons reveal this distorted understanding of the world by giving answers which are slanted in the direction of the television world in response to survey questions. Since television presents a wide variety of overt and covert messages, some violent, some not, it is not entirely obvious what the "television answer" to a particular survey question should be. In some of their analyses, Gerbner et al. (1977a; 1977b) overcome this ambiguity by setting up items which have clearly defined "television world" and "real world" alternatives. The former are indicated by their own documentation (Gerbner and Gross, 1976; Gerbner et al., 1977a; 1977b) of the content of television, and the latter are documented by the census, or with FBI crime data. In the case of these items a "television answer" can be objectively determined.[4] By making a few assumptions, the same is true for the items concerning fear of victimization, taking precautions against crime, and the approval of violence. However, the case is not nearly so clear for the items concerning anomia and U.S. involvement in world affairs.

Gerbner and Gross (1976) in laying the groundwork for their argument, make a key assumption about the basic function of television:

> We begin with the assertion that television is the central cultural arm of American society. It is an agency of the established order and as such serves primarily to extend and maintain rather than to alter, threaten, or weaken conventional conceptions, beliefs, and behaviors. Its chief cultural function is to spread and stabilize social patterns, to cultivate not change but resistance to change. Television is a medium of the socialization of most people into standardized roles and behaviors. Its function is, in a word, enculturation. (Gerbner and Gross, 1976:175).

After making a similar statement, Gross and Jeffries-Fox (1978:242) add the following: "Because media messages are commodities manufactured for sale, their perspective reflects institutional organization and control. The goal of greatest audience appeal at least cost demands that these messages follow conventional social morality." It would appear that if these statements accurately represent the function of television in American society, then (before looking at the results of a survey including such questions) one might reasonably predict that those who watch a great deal of television would have attitudes which reflect the interests of the established order, particularly as they have existed in the United States during the time that television has been a common element in American society. Consistent with this theory is the prediction that heavy watchers of television would be more likely to believe that the United States should take an active part in world affairs. Clearly it would serve the dominant political and economic interests in the United States, and the interests of multinational corporations, if the American people had attitudes which are consistent with U.S. involvement in a variety of international situations. Therefore, in regard to this item, given the logic of their analysis of the function of television, it is easily argued that Gerbner et al. (1978a) have chosen the wrong alternative as the "television answer" to this question. A very similar argument can be made for the items measuring the beliefs that public officials are interested in the problems of the average man, that the lot of the average man is getting better, and that it is fair to bring children into the world.

---

[4] The analysis of these items included simultaneous controls, but may be criticized for having an inadequate list of control variables. (See Gerbner et al., 1977b:Table 69).

If we make our judgments according to this argument, then the analyses in the present paper uniformly fail to support cultivation theory. In the absence of better data (and a better measure of television exposure which should at the very least not collapse television watching into the three gross categories necessary for cultivation "analysis"), it is difficult to know precisely what these findings imply.

For example, it could be that the particular theory of cultivation offered by Gerbner and his associates is incorrect and that television actually cultivates many realistic and functional conceptions of the world (since persons who watch more than minimal amounts do not appear to be very convinced that (1) public officials really care about the average citizen, (2) the lot of the average is getting better, and (3) that the United States should persist in foreign involvements), and that it has the effect (when we compare light and heavy watchers) of producing negative attitudes about violence in spite of the fact that, as Gerbner and his associates have shown, television produces a very heavy barrage of violent imagery. Clearly, such a conclusion is not warranted by the present analysis, but it should not be dismissed.

Alternatively, it could be that cultivation theory is correct, but that the analytical procedures used by Gerbner and his associates are incapable of uncovering such an effect because total exposure to television does not specifically tap what people who watch are exposed to. While it may be very useful to know what total television watching is related to, some of the more subtle effects might be more apparent only if we knew precisely what people watched and were able to control for predetermined personality and other characteristics which are related to the selection of certain kinds of programs.

Finally, cultivation theory may be a gross oversimplification of how television affects behavior through culture. That is, television in

American society may be related to the diffusion of culture and to alterations in social structure, both of which affect the behavior of virtually all persons in the society regardless of how much television they watch. For example, persons who watch television may be carriers of cultural innovations, ways of conceptualizing the world, and variations in lifestyle which, through social interaction in the real world, are diffused to persons who had little, if any contact with the original messages. Furthermore, television structures the markets for consumer goods of all kinds, and therefore is in large part responsible for the way consumers are tied into the economy and the way producers develop products and organize marketing activities. If, for example, television affects the way leisure time is used, then it will affect the kinds of products that will be produced, the way they are sold, and, in part, how they are used. Such a chain of events affects a broad category of persons regardless of their viewing habits or the content of the programs they watch. Similarly, television has changed the structure of political campaigns, and modified the way persons view the political system and their personal relationship to it. In short, if the effects of television on American society are as pervasive as these limited examples suggest, then trying to uncover the effect of television by comparing heavy and light watchers is bound to result in inconsistent and largely uninterpretable findings.

References

Andrews, Frank, James Morgan, and John Sonquist
1969 Multiple Classification Analysis. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.
Bogart, L.
1972a "Negro and white media exposure: new evidence." Journalism Quarterly 49:15–21.
1972b The Age of Television. 3rd ed. New York: Frederick Ungar.
Bower, Robert T.
1975 Television and the Public. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston.
Comstock, George, Steven Chaffee, Natan Katzman, Maxwell McCombs, and Donald Roberts
1978 Television and Human Behavior. New York: Columbia University Press.
Davis, James Allan
1978a General Social Surveys, 1972–1978: Cumulative Data (machine readable data file). Chicago: National Opinion Research Center (producer). New Haven, Conn.: Roper Public Opinion Research Center, Yale University (distributor).
1978b General Social Surveys, 1972–1978: Cumulative Codebook. Chicago: National Opinion Research Center.

Doob, Anthony N., and Glenn E. Macdonald
1979 "Television viewing and fear of victimization: is the relationship causal?" Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 37:170–79.
Ennis, P. H.
1967 "Criminal victimization in the United States: a report of a national survey." Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
Gerbner, George
1972 "Violence in television drama: trends and symbolic functions," in G. A. Comstock and E. A. Rubinstein (eds.), Television and Social Behavior, Vol. 1: Content and Control. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office.
Gerbner, George, and Larry Gross
1976 "Living with television: the violence profile." Journal of Communication 26:173–99.
Gerbner, George, Larry Gross, Michael F. Eleey, Marilyn Jackson-Beeck, Suzanne Jeffries-Fox, and Nancy Signorielli
1977a "Violence profile no. 8: the highlights." Journal of Communication 27:171–80.
1977b "Violence profile no. 8: trends in network television drama and viewer conceptions of social reality, 1967–1976." The Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania.
1978a "Cultural indicators: violence profile no. 9." Journal of Communication 28:176–207.
1978b "Violence profile no. 9: trends in network television drama and viewer conception of social relation, 1967–1977." The Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania.
Gerbner, George, Larry Gross, Michael Morgan, and Nancy Signorielli
1979 "Television viewing and fear of victimization: specification or spuriousness." The Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania.
Gross, Larry, and Suzanne Jeffries-Fox
1978 " 'What do you want to be when you grow up little girl'?" in Gaye Tuchman, Arlene Kaplan Daniels, and James Benet (eds.), Health and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media. New York: Oxford University Press.
Hughes, Michael, and Richard A. Peterson
1980 "Television watching and socio-political attitudes: an empirical study of the effects on sexism, racism, conservatism, alienation, quality of life indicators, and attitudes about violence." Unpublished paper.
Nettler, Gwynn
1978 Explaining Crime, 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Reactions to Sex on Television: An Exploratory Study

JOYCE N. SPRAFKIN, L. THERESA SILVERMAN, AND
ELI A. RUBINSTEIN

IN RECENT YEARS, one of the most harshly criticized aspects of television programing has been the treatment of sexual content. Public opinion polls reveal that slightly more than 50 percent of those surveyed report some degree of dissatisfaction (Bower, 1973; Callum, 1979; Roper, 1974; Ryan, 1976; Waters, 1978). This sentiment has been expressed more actively by certain segments of the population. In one year alone, the Federal Communications Commission noted a

---

Abstract A sample of 660 adults watched one of 15 randomly selected half-hour or hour programs which were representative of prime-time major network offerings in the fall 1977 season and which had been objectively analyzed for the presence of physically intimate and sexual content. The adults were asked to rate the amount of sexual content in the program and the suitability of that content for adult, teenage, and child audiences and to estimate how often specific physically intimate behaviors were present in the show. Each adult provided demographic data, completed an attitude survey on TV sex, and evaluated how suitably 13 sexual topics have been portrayed on TV. Through correlational analyses, the study provides information about what kinds of people are responding in which ways to specific kinds of physically intimate portrayals on television.

Joyce N. Sprafkin is Chief of the Laboratory of Communications at Long Island Research Institute and a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry, State University of New York at Stony Brook. L. Theresa Silverman is an Assistant Professor of Journalism and Mass Communications at New York University. Eli A. Rubinstein is Adjunct Research Professor of Psychology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Senior Fellow at Long Island Research Institute. The authors are pleased to acknowledge the American Medical Association and Media Action Research Center, Inc. in affiliation with United Methodist Communications, Reformed Church in America, Church of the Brethren and Disciples of Christ for funding this study. They especially wish to thank Suellen Muldoon, Emanuel Steindler, Nelson Price, and Ben Logan for their support, and to express appreciation to the following individuals for assistance on the project: Gretchen Daly, Jeffrey Endick, Tony Grilli, Lisa Laudante, Maureen McCarthy, Alec Mendelson, Carrie Ann Miller, Carol Pearlman, Michael Saputo, Kathy Tobin, and Marilyn Woznicki. Special thanks are extended to Jean Watt, Phyllis Kayten, and Ronald Kent.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University

Published by Elsevier North-Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/80/0044-303/$1.75

threefold increase in the number of complaints about "obscenity, profanity and indecency on the airwaves" (Waters, 1978). Even more extreme steps have been taken by one group, which published a list of 1977–78 prime-time programs ranked by amount of sexual content and identified with their advertising sponsors, asking the public to use this information to modify their consumer practices (National Federation for Decency, 1977).

Formal content analyses of the past several seasons (Abel and Fontes, 1976; Fernandez-Collado and Greenberg, 1978; Franzblau et al., 1977; Silverman et al., 1979) have documented an increase in the frequency of certain kinds of sexual portrayals, specifically flirtatious behavior, suggestive comments, and contextually implied intercourse. On the other hand, what has remained consistent over the sampled years is that explicit behaviors (such as intercourse) are never actually seen on the screen but are only referred to verbally or contextually implied, and that a large portion of the references to sexuality occur in a humorous format.

The impact of televised portrayals of sex on children and youth may be at issue for many people who are currently raising objections. Roberts et al. (1978) reported that in a sample of parents of 3- to 11-year-old children, television was ranked second only to parents themselves as the primary source for their children's sexual learning. However, only 13 percent of the parents thought that their children received accurate information from the medium. Evidence from a survey conducted by the Independent Broadcasting Authority in England (reported by Eysenck and Nias, 1978) suggests that sexual more often than violent content was the reason why parents stopped their children from watching a program on television.

Concerns about TV sex are clearly related to individual differences which determine sensitivity to the issue. For example, in a California survey for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, place of residence was found to be an important variable. Of those people questioned in the San Jose area (Katzman and Laselle, 1974), 16 percent considered the "amount of sex, suggestiveness, and bad language on television a serious problem," while nearly double that percentage (30 percent) of the Sacramento sample agreed with the statement (Katzman, 1974). Moreover, such variables as gender, religion, age, and education have been identified as important determinants (*Time*, 1977) of more general attitudes about sexual mores and would be expected to relate to individuals' opinions about televised portrayals of sexuality as well.

In addition to these individual correlates, sensitivity to TV sex may relate to aspects of the television medium itself: the extreme heterogeneity of the television audience (particularly with respect to age), the lack of a clearly defined and uniformly applied rating system (like the X-R-PG-G ratings of the movie industry), or the presence of the television within the very homes of its audience. On the other hand, the heart of such criticism may rest in the opinion by a majority of the viewing public that certain sexual topics are unsuitable for broadcasting on television or that TV presents a singularly humorous and/or exploitive treatment of human sexuality. While such speculations abound, to date there has been no systematic inquiry of the viewing public to determine which people are objecting to which specific kinds of televised sexual content.

The present survey took an initial, exploratory step in this direction. Several hundred adult members of community groups were shown a sample of television programs and made periodic ratings on the amount of sexual content in the programs and the suitability of that content for audiences of different ages. Demographic and general attitudinal information was collected from each participant and related to their attitudes about the televised sexual content. Since the sample of programs used in this study had been objectively analyzed for sexual content using a formal coding scheme (see Silverman et al., 1978), it was possible to examine the relationship between subjective and objective ratings of sexual content.

Method

SUBJECTS AND PERSONNEL

A total of 660 adults belonging to 26 different community groups, including parent-teacher, religious, charitable and social organizations, participated in the study. About 60 percent of these groups were recruited by a telephoned invitation and the remaining 40 percent responded to an advertisement placed in newspapers in several Long Island communities about 60 miles east of New York City. In all cases, $2 per participant was donated to the group's treasury. The sample characteristics were as follows: 79 percent were female and 21 percent male; 97 percent were white; the age range was 15–82 years, with a mean of 41 years; the highest education achieved was high school for 24 percent, some college for 29 percent, a college degree for 23 percent, and an advanced degree for 20 percent; the modal family income (38 percent) was between $20,000 and $30,000; the occupational positions were 9 percent skilled, 20 percent managerial, 6 percent professional, 45 percent housewives, 4 percent students, and 9 percent retired; 81 percent were married, and the remainder were separated, divorced, widowed, or single; 32 percent were Catholic, 29 percent Jewish, 21 percent Protestant, and 14 percent other; 84 percent had children; 68 percent had children of elementary school age or younger, 36 percent had junior or senior high school age children, and 41 percent had college age or adult children.

Eight undergraduate research assistants, four male and four female, served as experimenters; all were white and between 21 and 23 years of age.

TELEVISION PROGRAM SAMPLE

A representative sample of programs was selected from the full week of major network (ABC, CBS, NBC) prime-time TV offerings which had been analyzed for physical contact and sexual behavior (Silverman et al., 1979). From the larger 63-program sample, 15 programs were randomly selected within a proportionate sample by program type (resulting in three hour dramas, three hour crime/adventures, six half-hour situation comedies, and three half-hour variety shows[1]). The commercials were removed from these programs and an audio dub inserted after every four minutes. The programs were shown on an 11-inch black-and-white Sony monitor for 64 percent of the showings (evenly distributed over the 15 programs) and on an 11-inch color Sony monitor for the remaining showings.

The sexual content data for these programs were based on the ratings collected for the larger sample (see Silverman et al., 1978, for coding details). Pairs of trained assistants independently coded the instances of 23 categories of physical contact and sexual behavior (including nonsexual interpersonal touching, affectionate displays, typical sexual behaviors and references, and more controversial sexual practices) tallying separately physical, verbal, and implied modes of presentation. For the current analysis, all categories which had tallied instances (as listed in Table 1) were collapsed over the presentation modes. After calculating intercoder agreement with Pearson's product-moment coefficients (median $r = +.95$, range $+.30$ to $+1.00$), the category frequencies for each program were averaged over the two ratings. A comparison of these category frequencies with those reported for the entire week (Silverman et al., 1979) indicated that the smaller sample was representative of the 1978–79 prime-time network offerings.

PROCEDURE

The study was conducted in the meeting places of the participating groups (e.g., school auditoriums, church basements, group members' homes). At the beginning of the experimental session, each commu-

---

[1] Only the first or second half-hour of the variety shows was shown; which half was randomly chosen.

Table 1. Correlation Between the Amount of Various Sexual Behaviors Based on Objective[a] and Subjective[b] Ratings

Sexual Behavior	*Correlation*
Kiss	.58*
Hug	.68**
Ritualistic touching[c]	−.20
Supportive touching[c]	−.34
Affectionate touching[c]	.36
Accidental touching	−.18
Professional touching	.33
Suggestiveness	.65**
Intercourse	.36
Nonsexual aggression	.89**
Nonaggressive child contact	.80**
Aggressive child contact	.99**
Homosexuality	.98**
Prostitution	.90**
Transvestism/transsexualism	.98**
Other atypical sex	−.08

[a] Frequency per half hour, collected by pairs of raters, using Silverman et al. (1978) coding procedure.

[b] Based on estimates of the amount of each behavior averaged across the adults viewing each program.

[c] Objective category correlated with subjective rating of nonaggressive touching.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

nity group's participants ($\bar{X} = 22$ people) were divided into two to six subgroups (subgroup $\bar{X} = 8$ people). Each subgroup was tested in a different room by one of the research assistants, who explained the purpose of the study and administered each section of the anonymous survey. With the exception of the particular randomly assigned television program shown, the one- to one-and-one-half-hour procedure was identical for each subgroup and included the following five parts in order of presentation.

Demographic Survey. The respondents were asked to complete a survey containing multiple-choice questions about their age, sex, race, marital status, educational level, occupation, family income, religious preference.

Television Program Sexual Content and Suitability Rating Form. The respondents were shown one of the 15 videotaped television programs. Once every four minutes, the research assistant stopped the recorder and asked the participants to rate that program segment for the degree of sexual content presented ("The degree of sexual content in this segment is: none, slight, moderate, or high") and for the suitability of that sexual content for an adult, teen, and child audience ("In terms of *sexual* content, how suitable is this sequence for: most adults, the average 14-year-old, and the average 8-year-old;" the scale choices were unsuitable, slightly suitable, moderately suitable, and very suitable). The research assistant emphasized that the suitability ratings were to be based only on the sexual content, not on other program dimensions (e.g., violence). At the end of the program, the respondents were asked to provide overall ratings on sexual content and suitability for the program.

Behavior Rating Form. The respondents were asked to indicate how often the adult characters in the program they just saw were involved in or spoke about each of the physical contact and sexual behaviors listed in Table 1. They indicated their rating for each listed behavior on a 4-point scale (none, low, moderate, or high amount).

General Attitude Survey. Using agree/disagree items and 5-point scales from "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly," this survey included items about the respondents' own sexual liberalism vs. conservatism, child-rearing practices, and their opinions about sex on TV (e.g., perceived effects on children and family life, TV industry vs. family responsibility, etc.).

Suitability of TV's Presentation of Sexual Topics. Considering their own past viewing experiences, the respondents were asked to indicate how suitably (unsuitable, or slightly, moderately, or very suitable) for each of three audiences (adult, teenage, and child), TV has presented 13 sexual topics.[2]

Results and Discussion

How do the public's subjective ratings of the amount of sexual content on TV programs relate to objective ratings? The adults' estimates of the amount of each category of sexual behavior (Behavior Rating Form) averaged within program were correlated with the frequencies of these behaviors as determined by the formal coding procedure (Silverman et al., 1979). The Pearson product-moment correlations which are presented in Table 1 show that for the majority of physically intimate behaviors, there was a high degree of correspondence between the objective and subjective ratings. The coded categories that related least well to the adults' ratings were other atypical sexual behavior (which was a low frequency category), the five touching categories (which are primarily nonsexual and not of prime interest), and intercourse.

Given the relevance of the intercourse category to sexual content, the correlation coefficients were examined to determine which, if any, of the objective categories were related to the adults' perceptions of intercourse in the TV programs. The subjective ratings of intercourse were significantly related to the objectively coded presence of affectionate touching ($r = +.77, p < .01$), suggestiveness ($r = +.69, p < .01$), kissing ($r = +.60, p < .01$), prostitution ($r = +.55, p < .05$), and other atypical sexual behavior ($r = +.55, p \leq .05$). Apparently, the adults rated the presence of intercourse based on scanty or suggestive evidence and treated the behaviors as nonmutually exclusive categories. In contrast, the trained coders tallied as intercourse only those instances in which heterosexual intercourse was explicitly portrayed, unambiguously implied by context cues, or mentioned with a direct verbal reference. Further, sexual contacts that are generally discouraged by society (e.g., prostitution) were coded under the more specific categories rather than as intercourse.

---

[2] The 13 topics rated were childbirth, birth control, abortion, necking or petting, premarital sex, marital sex, extramarital sex, homosexuality, prostitution, striptease, transsexualism (changing one's sex), rape, and child molesting.

Which televised behaviors predict viewer ratings of sexuality and suitability? The objectively coded behavioral frequencies per half hour of programing were correlated with the adults' program ratings of sexual content and suitability averaged within program (Television Program Sexual Content and Suitability Rating Form). As can be seen in Table 2, the behaviors that correlated directly with sexual content ratings and inversely with suitability ratings were: kissing, affection-

Table 2. Correlations Between Objectively Coded Behavioral Frequencies[a] and Adult Ratings of Program Sexual Content and Suitability[b]

	Sexual Content	*Adult Suitability*	*Teen Suitability*	*Child Suitability*
Kiss	.61**	−.52*	−.67**	−.68**
Hug	.42	−.17	−.27	−.33
Ritualistic touching	−.37	.18	.31	.34
Supportive touching	.03	−.21	−.12	−.07
Accidental touching	−.19	.11	.11	.20
Professional touching	−.09	.01	.02	.02
Affectionate touching	.72**	−.68**	−.79**	−.76**
Suggestiveness	.70**	−.64**	−.69**	−.68**
Intercourse	.25	−.43	−.34	−.36
Nonsexual aggression	−.03	−.34	−.15	−.13
Nonaggressive child contact	−.41	.29	.38	.39
Aggressive child contact	−.25	.16	.20	.17
Homosexuality	.37	−.35	−.51*	−.51*
Prostitution	.43*	−.57*	−.53*	−.45*
Transvestism/transsexualism	.20	−.21	−.30	−.28
Other atypical sex	.43*	−.57*	−.53*	−.45*

[a] Per half hour of programing.

[b] Overall program ratings averaged over the adults viewing each program.

$^{*} p < .05$.

$^{**} p < .01$.

ate touching, suggestiveness, prostitution, and other atypical sexual behaviors. In addition, homosexuality, while related neither to sexual content nor adult suitability ratings, was negatively correlated with teen and child suitability judgments.[3]

Thus, there were certain behaviors which triggered judgments that sexual content was both present and unsuitable. It should be noted that, as instructed, the adults seemed to be making their judgments of suitability on the basis of only the sexual content; the amount of nonsexual aggression in the programs did not relate to the judgments of suitability even though the respondents objected to TV violence as much as, if not more than, TV sex as indicated by their responses to the general attitude survey.

Since the objectively coded frequency of intercourse references did not correspond well with the adults' subjective estimates of this category, these subjective estimates were correlated with the mean program ratings of sexual content and suitability. Those programs judged by adults to contain intercourse were considered highly sexual ($r = +.87, p < .01$) and unsuitable for children, teenagers, and adults ($r = -.95, -.96$, and $-.86$ respectively, $p < .01$ in all cases).

Which sexual topics are considered unsuitably presented on TV? Since the sample of 15 programs did not include the full range of sexual behaviors which currently appears on television, the respondents were asked to consider their home viewing and to indicate how suitably television has presented 13 sexual topics for the adult, teen, and child audiences (Suitability of TV's Presentation of Sexual Topics). For every topic, the percentage of respondents considering it unsuitable increased and the percentage considering it very suitable decreased as the reference point changed from the adult to the teen to the child audience.

More than 50 percent of the respondents rated 10 of the 13 topics (including abortion, necking or petting, homosexuality, transsexualism, prostitution, rape, extramarital sex, premarital sex, child molesting, and striptease) as unsuitably presented for children. Regardless of whether child viewers actually witnessed or were intended to witness the listed topics, the surveyed adults made extremely harsh judgments about the suitability of TV's treatment of these topics when children comprised the considered audience. Indeed, televised portrayal of childbirth was the only topic which failed to receive a resounding veto for child viewers, with 59 percent of the respondents reporting to have seen slightly, moderately, or very suitable presentations.[4]

---

[3] The same correlational analysis was performed using the four-minute sequence ratings; however, to assure independence of ratings, for each adult the subjective rating of only one randomly determined sequence was entered into the group average. Thus, each subjective sequence rating was based on the mean of 20–40 adults. Since the magnitude of the correlations between objective and subjective ratings was virtually identical whether sequence or overall program ratings were considered, all subsequent analyses were performed on only the overall program data.

In general, the suitability judgments for teenage audiences were somewhat more moderate and variable than they were for children. For some topics, the percentage of respondents who experienced very suitable portrayals was larger than the percentage who experienced unsuitable portrayals (specifically childbirth and birth control). As for the less extreme sexual topics (e.g., abortion, petting, and marital sex), the percentage of people who judged past TV portrayals to be even slightly suitable was at least twice as high as the percentage who judged them unsuitable for teenage viewing. Nevertheless, at least 40 percent of the adults rated as unsuitable for teenage viewing TV's portrayals of striptease, rape, prostitution, extramarital sex, and child molesting.

In terms of the suitability ratings for an adult audience, the television industry seems to have fared quite well. Only a small percentage of people considered any of the 13 topics in their past TV viewing experience to have been unsuitably presented for adult audiences. The most harshly criticized were past portrayals of two aggressive behaviors (child molesting and rape) and homosexuality, which were the only topics to be rated as unsuitable by more than 20 percent of the respondents.

What viewer characteristics are predictive of sexual content suitability and topic suitability ratings? Nine viewer characteristics were selected as possible determinants of adults' judgments of how suitable television's sexual content is for adult, teen, and child audiences. These demographic and personal attributes were correlated with two sets of suitability judgments: the overall program suitability ratings of sexual content in the episodes shown in the study, and the ratings of sexual topic suitability based on home viewing. The latter set of scores were derived by collapsing within audience age group the adults' ratings of the suitability of TV's past presentations of the 13 sexual topics.

Table 3 presents the viewer characteristics and their contribution to explained variance in the suitability ratings. Overall, the characteristics that were related to the suitability ratings were consistent with those reported in sexual attitude surveys (*Time*, 1977). Specifi-

---

[4] There were a number of respondents who spontaneously mentioned the ABC Afterschool Special "My Mom's Having a Baby" (which was rebroadcast only a few months prior to our survey) in this context, so that this program might account for the more liberal opinion registered for the topic of childbirth.

Table 3. Percentage of Variance Accounted for[a] by Demographic Characteristics in Determining Ratings of (1) Sexual Content Suitability and (2) Sexual/Topic Suitability[b]

Demographic Variables	*Suitability for Adults*		*Suitability for Teens*		*Suitability for Children*	
	(1)	*(2)*	*(1)*	*(2)*	*(1)*	*(2)*
Age	(−)6.66**	(−)10.72**	(−)4.62**	(−)4.86**	(−)4.59**	(−)3.55**
Sex	.66	1.01*	.17	.04	.08	.71
Marital status	1.70	2.24*	.59	3.25**	.74	4.54**
Education	.16	7.43**	.33	6.66**	.09	5.76**
Income[c]	.69	1.32*	0	.23	0	.98
Religion	.73	7.02**	1.25	12.74**	2.60**	23.21**
Frequency of church attendance	(−).86*	(−)4.33**	(−)6.70*	(−)6.41**	(−)1.80**	(−)7.69**
Sexual attitude[d]	1.03**	8.88**	3.43**	14.77**	3.71**	14.96**
Sex openness with children[e]	.05	6.10**	1.14*	11.85**	1.61**	10.98**

[a] After the variance attributable to program type was removed. (−) indicates inverse relationship.

[b] Collapsed over 13 sexual topics.

[c] After variance attributable to education removed.

[d] Based on 5-point self-rating scale of conservatism-to-liberalism.

[e] Based on extent of agreement (5-point "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly" scale) with two statements: "If young children are told a lot about sex, they are likely to experiment with sex before they should," and, "A parent should wait for a child to ask a direct question about sexuality before discussing sexual topics with him or her."

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

cally, individuals who were most critical of television's sexual content were older, rated themselves as having conservative sexual attitudes, affiliated with traditional religions, attended religious services frequently, were not highly educated, and opposed early sex education for children. Separated and divorced females tended to be slightly less critical of the sexual content in their own television viewing experiences.

What are the respondents' attitudes about TV sex? The respondents believed TV violence to be more of a problem than TV sex. Ninety-one percent agreed with the statement, "There is too much violence on TV," while only 63 percent agreed with the parallel statement for sexual content. Further, when asked, "Which is more harmful for children to see on TV?" violence was noted by 48 percent, and sex by only 3 percent; nevertheless, 44 percent responded that "both are equally bad." The predominance of violence over sex as a concern may relate to the geographic area in which the study was conducted. It is possible that the people in this area are generally more liberal about sex and more concerned about violence than a similar sample of people from the South or Midwest would be. In light of this, the fact that more than half the sample considered TV sex as unsuitable for viewing by children cannot be overlooked.

When parents were asked to specify the reasons for the concern about TV sex, and to say what would happen if children are exposed to televised sexual themes that are new to them, many of the respondents felt that such experiences lead children to "ask questions about topics they are too young to understand" (48 percent), "be confused or upset" (41 percent), "use language that is unacceptable to the parents" (41 percent), "tolerate behaviors or lifestyles in others that are unacceptable to the parents" (35 percent), or "experiment with sex-related behaviors that are unacceptable to the parents" (20 percent).

However, there was far from a consensus of response to this question or to others about possible effects of exposure to TV sex. Forty-five percent of the parents felt that receiving new sex information from TV might cause children to "initiate useful discussions with their parents," and 19 percent felt children might "learn something positive." Further, 73 percent of the adults indicated that at some time sexual content on TV had prompted a discussion in their household, and that the ensuing discussion was a positive or useful experience for 51 percent of these and a negative one for only 5 percent. A majority (65 percent) disagreed with a linkage between teenage promiscuity and televised sex; and more than half of the respondents (55 percent) perceived televised sexual innuendos to be harmless.

There were also wide variations in the adults' responses to questions about how objectionable TV content is handled in the family situation and the broadcast industry's responsibilities regarding such content. When objectionable sexual content appears on TV when they are viewing with their children, half the parents (49 percent) claimed to use it as an opportunity for a discussion with their children, while a quarter of them claimed they ignore it (26 percent), distract the child (23 percent), or change the channel (23 percent). Only a small minority make such active protests as "writing a letter to the network or advertiser" (4 percent) or "making note of the sponsors and boycotting the companies' products" (5 percent).

In terms of the responsibility for controlling what children view, only 37 percent agreed with the statement, "Networks should not be forced to decrease the amount of sex or violence on TV. It's up to parents to control what their children watch." Morover, 83 percent agreed with the family viewing time principle that programs broadcasted before 9 P.M. should be suitable for a child audience, and 84 percent found the "mature audience" warnings to be a desirable broadcasting practice.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that this was a nonrandom sample from a predominantly white, female, suburban New York population and that the results cannot be generalized nationally, the findings of this study strongly suggest that adults are uneasy about children being exposed to televised sex. There seem to be specific behaviors and topics that are considered particularly taboo for children and adolescents. However, given the homogeneity of the sample, there was tremendous variability in the reasons why this content provoked concern. Indeed, some respondents felt that benefits could accrue from such exposure. One might anticipate even greater diversity of response in a survey using a national probability sample. In any case, the majority of respondents indicated that both the broadcast industry and parents were jointly responsible for what children see on TV. Unfortunately, at the present time, empirical evidence on the effects of TV sex is nonexistent. Research addressing this issue would surely help broadcasters and parents to take sensible and effective action.

References

Abel, J., and B. Fontes
1976 "The portrayal of illegal, sexual and violent behaviors in prime-time television programming." Unpublished manuscript, Michigan State University, 1976.

Bower, R. T.
1973 Television and the Public. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Callum, M.
1979 "Exclusive poll: what viewers think about TV." TV Guide 27 (May 12): 6–12.

Eysenck, H. J., and D. K. Nias
1978 Sex, Violence and the Media. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Fernandez-Collado, C., and B. S. Greenberg, with F. Korzenny and C. K. Atkin
1978 "Sexual intimacy and drug use in TV series." Journal of Communication 28:30–37.

Franzblau, S., J. N. Sprafkin, and E. A. Rubinstein
1977 "Sex on TV: a content analysis." Journal of Communication 27:164–70.

Katzman, N. I.
1974 Community Survey, Sacramento, California. Washington, D.C.: Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Katzman, N. I., and S. Laselle
1974 Community Survey, San Jose, California. Washington, D.C.: Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

National Federation for Decency
1977 Sex on Television. Tupelo, Mississippi (P. O. Box 1398).

Roberts, E. J., D. Kline, and J. Gagnon
1978 Family Life and Sexual Learning. Cambridge, Mass.: Project on Human Sexual Development.

Roper Organization
1975 Trends in Public Attitudes Toward Television and Other Mass Media: 1959–1974. New York: Roper Organization, Inc., 1975.

Ryan, M.
1976 "Family viewing time—has it passed the test?" TV Guide 24 (June 5):5–10.

Silverman, L. T., J. N. Sprafkin, and E. A. Rubinstein
1978 Sex on Television: A Content Analysis of the 1977–78 Prime-time Programs. New York: Brookdale International Institute Occasional Paper.
1979 "Physical contact and sexual behavior on prime-time TV." Journal of Communication 29:33–43.

Time
1977 "The sexes: the new morality—an exclusive poll on what Americans really think about sex." Nov. 21:111–19.

Waters, H. F.
1978 "Sex and TV." Newsweek, Feb. 20:54–61.

Children's Dispositions Toward Proprietary Drugs and the Role of Television Drug Advertising

JOHN R. ROSSITER AND THOMAS S. ROBERTSON

CONCERN has been expressed that Americans are becoming a nation of pill takers. Many critics contend that this behavior is learned in childhood and that it is encouraged by TV advertising for proprietary (advertised nonprescription or "over-the-counter") drugs. However, knowledge of childhood dispositions toward proprietary drugs is lacking, as is information on the potential relationship of TV drug advertising to these dispositions. This lack of information caused the Federal Communications Commission to deny a petition by the attorneys general of 19 states seeking to prohibit TV advertising for proprietary drugs until after 9:00 P.M., when fewer children would be in the audience (Attorneys General, 1975). Proprietary drugs cannot be advertised on children's programs, but they can be advertised during adult and family programs, which constitute about 85 percent of children's viewing (Adler et al., 1980). Presumably, the proposed ban

---

Abstract This study of 668 children aged 8 to 13 from diverse social backgrounds suggests that children are, to a measurable extent, influenced by exposure to TV advertising for proprietary drugs but that the net result is moderate dispositions rather than strongly favorable dispositions toward these products. Subgroup analysis confirms the generality of these conclusions: some subgroups appear to be more responsive to TV drug advertising but none show strongly favorable attitudes or behaviors toward proprietary drugs.

John R. Rossiter is Associate Professor of Business at Columbia University and Thomas S. Robertson is Professor of Marketing at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. The study was conducted at the Wharton School's Center for Research on Media and Children and supported by National Science Foundation Grant No. APR 76-21130. The study and its conclusions are the sole responsibility of the authors. Appreciation is expressed to the editor and several anonymous reviewers for their comments on earlier drafts of this article.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University

Published by Elsevier North-Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/80/0044-316/$1.75

could be reconsidered should subsequent evidence suggest that TV drug advertising does predispose children toward proprietary drugs to an undue extent.

Previous studies of dispositions toward proprietary drugs among children (Atkin, 1978) and teenagers (Milavsky et al., 1975) suggest two important but tentative conclusions examined in greater depth in the present study. The first is that young people's dispositions toward proprietary drugs are *not* strongly favorable, as many critics have assumed. Atkin (1978: 74), for example, asked 256 children aged 10 to 12 the following question: "When you get a cold/stomachache, how much do you take some medicine for it?" Response alternatives and percentage responses were: always (12.5 percent), usually (24.5 percent), sometimes (44.5 percent), never (18.5 percent). Similarly, Milavsky et al. (1975: 473) obtained the following results with a sample of teenage boys: "You should take some [proprietary] drug preparations: every day (3 percent), whenever you feel a bit bad (11 percent), only if you feel pretty bad (40 percent), only if you feel really bad (35 percent), never (11 percent)." The modal responses and the infrequent strongly favorable responses suggest moderate dispositions toward proprietary drugs in childhood and teenage years.

A second important but tentative conclusion from these prior studies is that children's and teenagers' dispositions toward proprietary drugs are only weakly related to their exposure to TV drug advertising. Using dependent measures similar to the one exemplified above, Atkin (1978) found correlations in the .07 to .22 range with children's exposure to TV drug advertising, with only about half of the correlations reaching the .05 level of significance. Milavsky et al. (1975) found a Tau C correlation of only .01 between the "willingness" measure described above and teenagers' exposure to TV drug advertising, although a slightly higher and significant correlation of .12 was found between exposure and usage of proprietary drugs.

Several criticisms may be made of these prior studies, however, which lead us to regard the two conclusions as tentative. Atkin (1978) focused on a limited set of proprietary drugs, including cold and stomachache remedies but excluding cough and headache remedies. Milavsky et al. (1975) used a vague definition in their "willingness" measure ("some drug preparations") and used isolated brand names rather than representative proprietary drug categories in their usage measure. (Usage is a questionable variable where children are concerned since children rarely control proprietary drug usage, although it may be more applicable to teenagers, as in the Milavsky et al. study. The present study examines requests to parents as well as usage). Atkin (1978) employed a hybrid and possibly uninterpretable measure of TV drug advertising exposure in which TV viewing was multiplied by reported attention to four proprietary drug commercials. Milavsky et al., on the other hand, employed a cumulative measure of TV drug advertising exposure which appeared to have considerable construct validity. However, neither study examined the reliability of measures, and information about reliability is essential for estimating the true population correlations from sample data.

Moreover, there exists the possibility that certain children may be more strongly predisposed towards proprietary drugs, and perhaps toward advertising for proprietary drugs, than other children. This possibility was examined in the Atkin and Milavsky et al. studies through partial correlation. However, these partial correlations were subject to the same potential problems noted above in conjunction with the overall results. Also, absolute levels of dispositions for various subgroups were not examined. The importance of examining subgroup trends that may be at variance with aggregate trends is clearly illustrated in Cronbach (1957) and Argyle and Delin (1965), where ample evidence is provided for relationships that apply only to certain subgroups of the population. In particular, it seems unlikely that all children are socialized similarly about proprietary drugs and that they are equally receptive to proprietary drug advertising. The "vulnerable subgroups" possibility was therefore reexamined in the present study.

The measures for this study were developed following extensive open-ended discussions with children about their attitudes toward common illnesses and proprietary drugs. A draft questionnaire was then pretested with a large sample of younger and lower SES children to ensure that they as well as older and higher SES children could understand the questions and the rating procedures. Based on these results, a final questionnaire was developed for the main study which incorporated items contributing to the overall index measures with high reliability.

Children's dispositions toward proprietary drugs were conceptualized in terms of traditional cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of attitude (McGuire, 1969), i.e., belief in the efficacy of proprietary drugs, liking to take them, and intention to take them; and two behavioral dimensions, i.e., requests to parents, and reported usage. The measures are shown with other measures employed in the study in Table 1. Each disposition measure is based on an index summed over the four most widely used proprietary drug categories: cold, cough, headache, and stomachache remedies (Target Group Index, 1975). Items for these indexes were interspersed throughout the questionnaire. Reliabilities as measured by Cronbach's coefficient alpha (α) with one exception were .70 or higher, indicating suitability for basic research (Nunnally, 1978). The exception was usage (α = .52), and this measure is discussed separately in the results section.

Children's exposure to TV drug advertising was measured in the same way as in the Milavsky et al. study (1975: 462), except that we used a current measure (one-month retrospective) rather than a cumulative one. Milavsky et al. demonstrated that the measure validly captures drug commercial exposure and not just general TV viewing level, although the two phenomena are of course highly related. We chose to measure current exposure, hoping to represent children's immediate responsiveness to TV drug advertising. Not having access to children's viewing histories, we could only examine possible cumulative exposure effects through the surrogate variable of age.

Five subgroups of children were identified as potentially more "vulnerable" than other children. It was expected that these children would exhibit more favorable dispositions toward proprietary drugs and stronger relationships between dispositions and exposure to TV drug advertising. These subgroups are as follows: (1) young children, who with less cognitive development and experience may be less discriminating toward proprietary drugs and proprietary drug advertising (the implicit counter-hypothesis, suggested by the long-run cumulative-effects position, is that older children would be more favorably disposed toward these products and toward TV drug advertising); (2) children from educationally "disadvantaged" families, who may receive less instruction about proprietary drugs and the way they are advertised and therefore may be more favorably disposed toward these products and toward advertising for them; (3) children who suffer frequently from the types of illnesses for which proprietary drugs are intended, with the expectation that more frequent illness may be instrumental in developing favorable dispositions toward proprietary drugs and toward proprietary drug advertising as a potentially relevant source of information about illness relief; (4) high illness anxiety children, for whom anxiety may function as a relevant motivational (emotional drive) variable which increases dispositions toward proprietary drugs and enhances responsiveness to proprietary drug advertising, and (5) (a subset of) older children who are occasionally allowed to take proprietary drugs without parental supervision, and who therefore may exhibit less "restrained" usage behavior and take a more personal interest in proprietary drug advertising.

These five subgroups generate five "pairs" of directional hypotheses to be tested in the study. In order to infer that TV drug advertising increases children's vulnerability to these products, it would have to

Table 1. Variables and Measures

Variable	*Measure*		*Coefficient* α
Exposure variable			
TV drug advertising exposure	Number of proprietary drug commercials per program as obtained from Broadcast Advertisers Reports (1977) weighted by viewing frequency, based on past month's viewing of a randomly selected list of 35 shows excluding shows during school hours and after 11:30 P.M.		.73
Disposition variables			
Belief in efficacy of proprietary drugs	Four-item index.[a] Sample item: "When I have a cold, cold medicine can make me feel better." Scoring: 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree.[b]		.81
Affect toward taking proprietary drugs	Four-item index.[a] Sample item: "When I have a cold, I like to take cold medicine." Scoring: 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree.[b]		.81
Intention to take proprietary drugs	Four-item index.[a] Sample item: "When I have a cold, I want to take cold medicine." Scoring: 1 = never to 4 = always.[c]		.75
Requests for proprietary drugs	Four-item index.[a] Sample item: "When I have a cold, I ask my parents for cold medicines." Scoring: 1 = never to 4 = always.[c]		.76
Usage of proprietary drugs	Four-item index.[a] Sample item: "Since school started in September, how many times have your parents given you cold medicines?" Scoring: 1 = never to 5 = five or more times.[d]		.52
Subgroup variables			
Age	Younger children = grade 3 (33%)	Older children = grades 5 and 7 (67%)	n.a.[e]
Education level of primary head of household	Low education = primary head did not finish high school (20%)	High education = primary head high school graduate or higher (80%)	n.a.[e]
Illness frequency	High illness = top quartile on 4-item illness frequency index.[a] Sample item: "How many times a year do you get colds?" Scoring: 1 = never to 5 = five or more times.[d] (25%)	Low illness = lower three quarters of sample on the illness frequency index. (75%)	.70
Illness anxiety	High anxiety = top quartile on 4-item illness anxiety index.[a] Sample item: "I worry a lot about getting colds." Scoring: 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree.[b] (25%)	Low anxiety = lower three quarters of sample on the illness anxiety index. (75%)	.84

Table 1. *(Continued)*

Variable	*Measure*		*Coefficient* α
Medicine control	Self-administration = grade 7 children who checked other than "never" responses on 4-item medicine control index.[a] Sample item: "Do your parents let you take cold medicine without asking them?" Scoring: 1 = never to 4 = always.[c] (68%)[f]	No self-administration = remainder of grade 7 children, who responded "never" to all four items on the medicine control index. (32%)[f]	.80

[a] Four-item indexes are based on the four symptoms most often treated by proprietary drugs: colds, coughs, headaches and stomachaches; and on the corresponding o-t-c medicine categories: cold medicine, cough medicine, headache medicine and stomachache medicine. Item scores were averaged to obtain mean index scores.

[b] Actual response format for these Likert-type scales was: NO ☐ no ☐ yes ☐ YES ☐, scored 1, 2, 3 and 4, respectively. This format has been found appropriate for children of the present age range (see Rossiter, 1977).

[c] Actual response format for these frequency questions was: ☐ never ☐ sometimes ☐ most times ☐ always, scored 1, 2, 3 and 4, respectively.

[d] Children were asked to circle a number, corresponding to the exact frequency, from the series 1, 2, 3, 4, 5+, where 5+ indicated five or more times.

[e] Single item measure for which internal consistency reliability is not applicable.

[f] Subgroups based on medicine control were confined to the oldest children in the sample (seventh grade) as the incidence of self-administration was very small below this age level.

be shown, first, that the particular subgroup has more strongly favorable dispositions toward proprietary drugs than other children, and, second, that their dispositions are more strongly related to TV drug advertising exposure.

The five subgroups are not mutually exclusive. However, it was felt that the policy relevance of the present research would be served better by examining relatively large and easily identifiable subgroups of children based on single classificatory variables than by examining the smaller subgroups that result when multiple identifying variables are used.

The sample for this study was drawn from inner city and suburban areas of Philadelphia, in March 1977. Parental permission letters were distributed to 1,050 children in six school districts (12 schools), representing a range of SES backgrounds, in the third, fifth, and seventh grades, an age range encompassing 8- to 13-year-olds. Of this number, 17 percent did not complete or return parental permission letters or were absent from school on the test date. A further 6 percent provided incomplete data (defined as one item or more omitted) or exhibited extreme language problems, and were deleted from the analysis. Another 2 percent were randomly removed from the sample because they were siblings of other children in the sample, and a follow-up interview with mothers was planned to obtain SES data, with each mother reporting on only one child. In 11 percent of cases, mothers and guardians could not be located or satisfactorily interviewed after two callbacks, resulting in further sample reduction. The various loss factors were judged unavoidable within the resources of the study. Losses did not appear to be systematic by age or SES groups.

The final sample for this analysis comprised 668 children, approximately equally divided by sex, at three grade levels: third ($N = 218$), fifth ($N = 222$) and seventh ($N = 228$). The SES profile of the sample, according to equally weighted head of household occupational and educational status, was as follows: upper middle class, 14 percent; lower middle class, 31 percent; working class, 34 percent; and disadvantaged, 21 percent. A large proportion of the disadvantaged group happened to be black, whereas the other SES groups were predominantly white. However, race was not a theoretically relevant variable in our study and thus was not specifically recorded.

Results

Children's dispositions toward proprietary drugs, for the total sample, are shown in Table 2. With the exception of one dispositional

Table 2. Mean Dispositions Toward Proprietary Drugs and Correlations with TV Drug Advertising Exposure (Total Sample)

	Total Sample (N = 668)			
Measure	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*Correlation with Exposure (Uncorrected)*[a]	*Correlation with Exposure (Corrected)*[b]
Belief[c]	3.2	.6	.12*	.16*
Affect	2.6	.8	.13*	.17*
Intention	2.5	.8	.16*	.21*
Requests	2.5	.8	.22*	.30*
Usage[d]	2.5	1.3	.06*	.10*
TV drug ad exposure[e]	13.8	8.2		

[a] All correlations are partialed for grade level; significance levels are based on 1-tailed tests.

[b] Correction for attenuation = $r_{xy}/(\sqrt{r_{xx}}\ \sqrt{r_{yy}})$.

[c] Range for first four measures is 1 to 4 with 4 = highest.

[d] Range for usage measure is 0 to 5 with 5 = highest.

[e] Measured in terms of number of 30-second drug commercials per week.

* $p < .05$.

measure, belief in the efficacy of proprietary drugs, the children's mean dispositions are very close to the midpoint of each scale. Specifically, the "average" 8- to 13-year-old child: agrees but does not strongly agree that proprietary drugs are effective; exhibits rather neutral affect, neither liking nor disliking to take these products; intends to take proprietary drugs about half the time when common illness symptoms occur; requests proprietary drugs about half the time when common illnesses occur; and, with parents presumably playing a deciding role, takes these products about 20 times a year (i.e., an average of five times a year for each of the four drug categories). The somewhat higher mean responses for the belief measure are an exception to the midpoint trends of the other measures. Children seem to exhibit considerabie belief in the efficacy of proprietary drugs.

The relationship of advertising to children's proprietary drug dispositions is also shown in Table 2. It should be noted that all correlations, which are Pearson product-moment coefficients, have been adjusted for the effects of less than perfect reliability in the component measures and are thus upper-limit estimates. Unadjusted correlations are shown in Table 2 to give an indication of the effect of this adjustment. Also, with the exception of age-specific results, all correlations have been partialed for grade level to eliminate a spurious increase in correlation due to mutually declining dispositions and exposure levels with increasing age.

According to our estimate, the average child is exposed to about 14 drug commercials per week, or approximately two each day in a typical day of TV viewing. The correlations between exposure and dispositions are, for the most part, relatively small, although all are statistically significant. Because of children's relatively strong beliefs in the efficacy of proprietary drugs, noted above, we further analyzed the relationship of this dispositional variable to advertising exposure ($r = .16$) and to proprietary drug use ($r = .20$, not shown) through partial correlation analysis controlling, respectively, for use and exposure. This analysis suggested that children's belief in the efficacy of proprietary drugs may be partly the result of presumably favorable usage experience as well as partly conditioned by advertising, regardless of usage experience. The correlations from which these relationships are inferred, however, are not large. Somewhat larger is the correlation between current exposure and requests for proprietary drugs ($r = .30$), where the shared variance is almost 10 percent.

Children's requests do not translate directly into usage, however. The correlation between advertising exposure and usage of proprietary drugs is quite small ($r = .10$). Because of the low reliability of the usage measure, we separately examined the correlations for each type of proprietary drug entering into the usage measure. These correlations were .13 for stomachache remedies, .09 for cough remedies, .04 for cold remedies, and .01 for headache remedies. The low overall usage correlation therefore seems adequately representative of the individual relationships. It is consistent with the supposition that parents mediate children's proprietary drug requests and thereby control children's use of these products.

Turning now to the subgroup hypotheses, it may be recalled that the hypotheses form "pairs." An inference of greater vulnerability for a particular subgroup requires significantly more favorable mean dispositions *and* significantly higher correlations of these dispositions with TV drug advertising exposure. Subgroup means are shown in Table 3 and subgroup correlations in Table 4.

Younger children have significantly more favorable mean dispositions toward proprietary drugs than older children do, although, interestingly, their usage rate is not significantly higher. Younger children are also exposed to significantly more TV drug advertising than older children, a difference of about 15 versus 13 commercial exposures per week. However, the correlational results do not indicate that younger children are more strongly influenced than older children by TV drug advertising. Only one of five correlations is significantly higher for younger children and on three measures the age differences are in the opposite direction. Consequently, the results do not support the hypothesis that younger children are more strongly affected than older children by exposure to TV drug advertising. Neither, inci-

Table 3. Mean Dispositions Toward Proprietary Drugs (Subgroups)[a]

	Age		*Parent Education*		*Illness Frequency*		*Illness Anxiety*		*Self-Administration*[b]	
	Younger (*N*=*218*)	*Older* (*N*=*450*)	*Low* (*N*=*132*)	*High* (*N*=*529*)	*High* (*N*=*171*)	*Low* (*N*=*497*)	*High* (*N*=*166*)	*Low* (*N*=*502*)	*Some* (*N*=*155*)	*None* (*N*=*55*)
Belief	3.5*	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.5*	3.1	2.9	2.9
Affect	2.8*	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.7*	2.5	2.9*	2.5	2.4	2.3
Intention	2.7*	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.7*	2.4	2.6*	2.4	2.4*	2.1
Requests	2.8*	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.7*	2.4	2.7*	2.4	2.2	2.3
Usage	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.5	3.2*	2.4	2.7*	2.4	2.3	2.1
TV drug ad exposure	15.2*	13.1	17.2*	12.9	15.2*	13.3	17.2*	12.7	11.7	13.7

[a] Scale ranges as in Table 2.

[b] Seventh grade only.

* Significant mean differences in the direction of the first-mentioned subgroup in each pair (one-tailed tests). $p < .05$.

Table 4. Correlations of Proprietary Drug Dispositions with TV Drug Advertising Exposure (Subgroups)[a]

	Age		*Parent Education*		*Illness Frequency*		*Illness Anxiety*		*Self-Administration*[b]	
	Younger (*N*=*218*)	*Older* (*N*=*450*)	*Low* (*N*=*132*)	*High* (*N*=*529*)	*High* (*N*=*171*)	*Low* (*N*=*497*)	*High* (*N*=*166*)	*Low* (*N*=*502*)	*Some* (*N*=*155*)	*None* (*N*=*55*)
Belief	−.02	.28	.06	.20	.23	.13	.26*	.07	.23	.29
Affect	.22	.14	.13	.17	.28*	.12	.39*	.02	.12	.26
Intention	.29*	.16	.44*	.12	.15	.22	.43*	.09	.19	.23
Requests	.26	.33	.39	.27	.25	.30	.43*	.21	.33	.34
Usage	.03	.15	.12	.10	.00	.09	.04	.07	.38	.23

[a] Correlations corrected for attentuation as in Table 2. All except those in the first and last two columns have been partialed for grade level since they involve children of different ages (see text).

[b] Seventh grade only.

* Significant differences in the direction of the first-mentioned subgroup in each pair (one-tailed tests). $p < .05$.

dentally, do they support the counter-hypothesis that older children are more vulnerable due to cumulative exposure.

Children from educationally "disadvantaged" families are exposed to a considerably higher level of TV drug advertising than children from other families: an average of 17 versus 13 commercial exposures per week. The correlational results suggest that disadvantaged children are somewhat more strongly affected by TV drug advertising than other children; exposure seems to have a rather sizable influence on their behavioral tendencies in the form of intentions ($r = .44$) and requests ($r = .39$) for these products. However, the comparison of mean results shows that educationally disadvantaged children do not differ from other children in terms of proprietary drug dispositions or usage levels. It seems, therefore, that the variance in behavioral tendencies is more highly related to TV drug advertising exposure for educationally disadvantaged children than for other children but that their mean tendencies toward proprietary drug usage are no different. Thus, on the basis of lack of mean differences we must reject the vulnerability hypothesis for the educationally disadvantaged subgroup.

Children who have a relatively high illness frequency are significantly more favorably disposed toward proprietary drugs than other children on four out of five measures, including usage, with the latter finding not unexpected. These children also are exposed to somewhat more TV drug advertising. However, the correlational results lend little credence to the argument that higher exposure results in more favorable dispositions, with the minor exception of the correlation for affect, indicating the tendency to like (or not mind) taking these products when symptoms occur. The more favorable dispositions of children who are more frequently ill appear to be unrelated to TV drug advertising exposure. The lack of correlational support in this case leads us to reject the vulnerability hypothesis for this subgroup.

The vulnerability hypothesis is, however, supported for children with more anxiety about illness. These children exhibit significantly more favorable dispositions toward proprietary drugs on all five measures. Their exposure to TV drug advertising is also considerably higher than that of other children, at an average of 17 versus 13 commercial exposures per week. The correlational results in this instance reveal a fairly strong relationship between exposure and dispositions. Four of the correlations for this subgroup are significantly higher than the correlations for the remainder of the sample, and three are comparatively large (on the order of $r = .40$). The exception is the small correlation between exposure and usage. Overall, the means and correlational results support the hypothesis that children with more anxiety about illness are a vulnerable subgroup but, even in this subgroup, children's dispositions toward proprietary drugs do not seem to be strongly favorable.

Older children who are occasionally allowed to take proprietary drugs on their own initiative constitute the final subgroup investigated in this study. The mean results and the correlational results both lead to rejection of the hypothesis that such children are more vulnerable to TV drug advertising than their seventh-grade peers. However, current exposure to TV drug advertising does appear to have a moderately large correlation with proprietary drug usage among such children (r = .38). The latter finding suggests that as parental control is lessened, which occurred in our sample for about three out of four older children, TV drug advertising may affect behavior. It is important to note that we are talking about short-run variation rather than long-run or cumulative effects. The results of Milavsky et al. suggest that the long-run effects of TV drug advertising on proprietary drug use by teenagers, where parental control may be even lower, is quite small (Tau C = .12). Also, even though older children's discretionary use may vary substantially with advertising exposure, our mean results suggest that their overall usage rate is no different from that of children of like age whose usage is parentally controlled. The lack of mean differences therefore leads us to reject the vulnerability hypothesis for this subgroup.

Discussion

The findings of the present study lend general and broader support to the findings of previous studies indicating that children (Atkin, 1978) and teenagers (Milavsky et al., 1975) are not strongly disposed toward usage of proprietary drugs. Children's rather moderate dispositions are to a modest extent influenced by their exposure to proprietary drug advertising on television (to the extent that influence can be inferred from simple correlational relationships) but this influence cannot be regarded as substantial unless 10 to 20 percent shared variance is regarded as substantial. Neither is there an age trend indicative of cumulative or long-run influence. In fact, children's dispositions toward proprietary drugs decline significantly as they grow older and are never very strong.

The present study obtained these findings with broad measures of children's proprietary drug dispositions and upper limit correlation estimates with TV drug advertising exposure that gave every chance for "effects" to emerge. Although the exposure-disposition relationships were examined only through correlation, which does not imply cause and effect, it may be noted that demonstration of strong correlations would be an essential step in a causal inference. Modest correlations, indicating less than 20 percent shared variance, in conjunction with moderate mean levels of dispositions, suggest that the argument that TV drug advertising produces strongly favorable dispositions toward proprietary drugs in childhood would be difficult to sustain in light of the present evidence, even for ostensibly "vulnerable" subsegments of the child population.

It is possible that multivariate analysis, examining the role of TV advertising in the context of other personal and social factors (see Shimp and Dyer, 1979), would find TV drug advertising to be an even smaller contributor to children's proprietary drug dispositions than we have found here. This possibility is suggested in an alternative (regression) analysis of the total sample data by Robertson et al. (1979). The present analysis chose to ignore the complexity of multivariate possibilities (beyond the exposure variable in interaction with the respective subgroup variables) in the interest of providing straightforward, if artificially isolated estimates of the role of TV drug advertising. Consequently, the advertising correlations should be regarded as upper limit estimates of exposure "effects" which are probably not reached in reality but are nevertheless informative, as upper limit estimates, for policy makers.

What do the present findings suggest for public policy? Current policy prohibits TV advertising for proprietary drugs on children's programs and does not allow such advertising at other times to be expressly directed to children. Further restrictions on TV drug advertising, e.g., until after 9:00 P.M. as proposed in the attorneys general petition to the FCC, do not seem warranted. Our findings indicate that children are exposed to TV drug advertising while watching general or adult programs, and that this advertising may to a small extent influence their attitudes and behaviors toward these products—at least on a short-run basis. However, children's attitudes and behaviors toward proprietary drugs remain at levels which can be described as moderate. Moreover, as children grow older and accumulate more experience with proprietary drugs and TV drug advertising, their dispositions toward these products become even more moderate. In other words, TV drug advertising does not seem to influence children to an extent that may be regarded as socially harmful or worthy of further legislative attention.

References

Adler, R. P., G. S. Lesser, L. K. Meringoff, T. S. Robertson, J. R. Rossiter and S. Ward

1980 The Effects of Television Advertising on Children. New York: Praeger.

Argyle, M., and P. Delin

1965 "Non-universal laws of socialization." Human Relations 18: 77–86.

Atkin, C. K.

1978 "Effects of drug commercials on young viewers." Journal of Communication 28: 71–79.

Attorneys General

1975 "Petition of the Attorneys General to promulgate a rule restricting the advertising of over-the-counter drugs." Before the Federal Communications Commission. Washington, D.C.

Broadcast Advertisers Reports, Inc.

1977 "Network TV: brand product and parent company schedule detail and expenditure estimates for the weeks ending February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 1977. New York: Broadcast Advertisers Reports, Inc.

Cronbach, L. J.

1957 "The two disciplines of scientific psychology." American Psychologist 12: 671–84.

McGuire, W. J.

1969 "The nature of attitudes and attitude change," pp. 136–314 in G. Lindzey and E. Aronson (eds.), The Handbook of Social Psychology, 2nd ed., Vol. 3: The Individual in a Social Context. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.

Milavsky, J. R., B. Pekowsky, and H. Stipp

1975 "TV drug advertising and proprietary and illicit drug use among teenage boys." Public Opinion Quarterly 39:457–81.

Nunnally, J. C.

1978 Psychometric Theory, 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Robertson, T. S., J. R. Rossiter, and T. C. Gleason

1979 "Children's receptivity to proprietary medicine advertising." Journal of Consumer Research 6: 247–55.

Rossiter, J. R.

1977 "Reliability of a short test measuring children's attitudes toward TV commercials." Journal of Consumer Research 3: 179–84.

Shimp, T. C., and R. F. Dyer

1979 "The pain-pill-pleasure model and illicit drug consumption." Journal of Consumer Research 6: 36–46.

Target Group Index

1975 Miscellaneous Drug Products. Report P-20. New York: Axiom Market Research Bureau, Inc.

Adolescents, Television, and Support for Government

DAVID R. BERMAN AND JOHN A. STOOKEY

RESEARCH indicates that television plays an important role as a mediating agency in political socialization (Rubin, 1978; Chaffee et al., 1970; Hollander, 1971). Two key variables that appear to be associated with both cognitive and affective political orientations of children and young adults are the amount of TV viewing and the types of programs viewed. Extensive viewing has been linked with low levels of political knowledge. As Rubin has concluded: "Extensive television viewing, per se, may be dysfunctional for the acquisition of political information and understandings of the workings of government" (Rubin, 1978: 129). On a more positive note, however, Rubin found that adolescents who watched extensive amounts of television displayed less political cynicism.

Most of the research on program content has involved the effects of network news and public affairs programs on viewers. Several researchers have found that these are major independent sources of political information for children and adolescents (Rubin, 1978; Chaffee et al., 1970; Hollander, 1971; Dominick, 1972; Rubin, 1976; Hawkins et al., 1975; Conway et al., 1975; Atkin and Gantz, 1978). Some research on adolescents has linked higher levels of public affairs viewing with more favorable attitudes toward government (Rubin, 1978). Yet, while one might speculate that public affairs programs

---

Abstract This research finds that support for government as measured by a feeling thermometer scale is negatively correlated with increased amounts of television viewing by adolescents and varies in affective directions with the types of programs young adults watch.

Professors David R. Berman and John A. Stookey are in the Political Science Department, Arizona State University. Data collection and analysis for this article were financed by Grant#77-656-1-IIIF-J(A) ("Youth Needs in Maricopa County, Arizona") awarded to Arizona State University (Professor John A. Stookey, principal investigator) by the Arizona State Justice Planning Agency. Work on this article was shared equally by the authors.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University

Published by Elsevier North-Holland, Inc.
0033-362X/80/0044-330/$1.75

may place government institutions in a more positive context than does television programing as a whole, there is also reason to believe that the net impact of news and public affairs programs on viewers is essentially negative. Previous research suggests that network news and public affairs programs have a heavy emphasis on negative information and anti-institutional themes (Robinson, 1976). For this reason and because of television's high credibility, viewers may respond to such broadcasts by "growing more cynical, more frustrated, more despairing" and "increasingly less enamored of their social and political institutions" (Robinson, 1976: 426).

Studies also suggest that certain types of entertainment programs, particularly those containing violence, may influence the political attitudes and behavior of young viewers (Comstock, 1975). The scope of the relationship between the political orientations of adolescents and the wide range of entertainment programs they view, however, has not been explored. This neglect apparently reflects the view that news programs contain more politically relevant stimuli than do entertainment programs, and thus are more likely to influence political orientations (Atkin and Gantz, 1978).

This study expands upon previous research by exploring how the amount of television viewing and the types of programs viewed by adolescents are related to their supportive attitudes toward government. Attention is given to several categories of entertainment programs as well as to news and public affairs programs. Because of the scarcity of previous studies on the relationships of concern in this article the authors have not formulated research hypotheses. Rather, our focus is on the following questions: Is the extent of TV viewing by adolescents correlated positively or negatively with their feelings toward various levels of government? Are different types of programs that young adults view correlated positively or negatively with these feelings?

Research Methods and Measures

Data for this study were gathered in the summer of 1978 in the Phoenix, Arizona, metropolitan area as part of a larger project funded by the Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration to determine the needs and problems of the area's youth. Interviewers were hired with funds from this project. Most of those hired had previous interviewing experience, and all were given extensive training including supervised practice interviews.

Interviews were conducted with a random sample of 600 adolescents aged 13 through 17. A multistage sampling design involving the random selection of census tracts, blocks, and dwelling units was used. Selected dwelling units were screened for teenagers. If a teenager lived in a selected home, he or she was interviewed. If more than one youth live in the selected dwelling, a random procedure based on age and sex was used to choose the respondent. If the initial unit was not the home of a 13- to 17-year-old, interviewers used a preestablished decision rule to select another unit on the block. The second unit was then screened for teenagers. This procedure was continued until a respondent was located. The interviewers were instructed to make at least three callbacks to attempt to complete the interview with the selected youth. If an interview was still not possible, a random replacement method was used. The response rate for originally selected youth was 81 percent.

Level of TV watching was operationalized as the adolescent's response to the question of how many hours per day on the average he or she watched television. Support for government was defined in three separate ways: support for the federal government, support for the state government, and support for the city government. Measures for the level of support were obtained by asking respondents to rate the levels of government on a "feeling" thermometer.[1] Those surveyed were told that ratings between 1 degree and 49 degrees indicated a cool feeling, a 50-degree rating indicated a neutral (neither cool nor warm) feeling, and that ratings beyond 51 degrees indicated a favorable or warm feeling with 99 degrees being the most favorable.

In order to explore the impact of certain program types on support for government, each respondent was given a checklist of 160 regularly scheduled programs currently being aired in the Phoenix metropolitan area and was asked to mark which of these he/she regularly watched. The list included all the network programs (including network reruns on an independent channel) and locally produced news and public affairs programs which were listed in the *TV Guide* for the week of August 1, 1978.

Program types were then isolated by factor analysis. Programs which loaded strongly on a factor (a loading of greater than .35) were used to create an index of the degree to which each type of program was watched. Indexes were based on the number of programs within each type watched by the teenager, divided by the number of programs of that type. Thus, each teenager was given an index score for each program type that varied between 0 (never watched any of the programs) to 1 (watched all the programs). These indexes served as independent variables to specify the relationship between type of TV viewing and support for government.

---

[1] The "feeling" thermometer device was modeled after the one found in Miller and Miller (1977: 916).

The sample had an average of four hours of television viewing per day, with a standard deviation of 2.08. Factor analysis of the program-watching behavior revealed six identifiable program types. These factors, and the programs which loaded most strongly on them, are summarized in Table 1. The indexes for each factor were then calculated. The mean and standard deviation of these are shown in Table 2.

The responses given by the adolescents on the governmental feeling thermometers are summarized in Table 3. As the table demonstrates, the mean is slightly higher for state government than for city government and higher for city than for federal government. Table 4 shows a substantial correlation between support for the various levels of government. There is, however, enough variation to warrant maintaining the distinction between them, rather than combining them into a single "support for government" scale. The validity of this approach

Table 1. Program Types as Determined by Factor Analysis

Factor	*Examples of Programs Which Load Strongly on the Factor*
Adult entertainment	M.A.S.H., Alice, Love Boat, One Day at a Time, Fantasy Island
Juvenile entertainment	Happy Days, Laverne and Shirley, Wonder Woman, The Wonderful World of Disney
Cartoons	Dynomutt, Jabberjaw, Fat Albert, etc.
News	Local and National News
Public affairs	Meet the Press, Face the Nation, several Public Broadcasting shows
Police shows	Baretta, Police Story, Police Woman, Kojak, Adam 12, Starsky and Hutch

Table 2. Summary Statistics of TV Viewing Indexes

Program Type	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*
Adult entertainment	.363	.217
Juvenile entertainment	.403	.243
Cartoons	.123	.209
News	.257	.319
Public affairs	.037	.140
Police shows	.338	.244

Table 3. Summary Statistics of Government Feeling Thermometers

Level of Government	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*
Federal	54.372	24.547
State	56.978	23.886
City	55.496	24.516

Table 4. Correlations Between the Support for the Three Levels of Government

	Federal	*State*	*City*
Federal		.637	.585
State	540		.735
City	541	537	

NOTE: Figures above the diagonal are Pearson *r*'s. Figures below the diagonal are the *N*'s for that combination of variables.

is supported by findings presented below, which show a differential impact of television on the various levels of government.

Findings

Data presented in Table 5 indicate a negative relationship between the amount of television watching and support for all levels of government. This relationship is maintained when income, race, and political philosophy are controlled for. Income and race were selected as controls because the literature indicates these are related to support for government.[2] Political philosophy was added on the assumption that this may affect both watching behavior and governmental support, thereby produicing spurious results. Political philosophy was operationalized as the self-classification of the respondent from strongly conservative to strongly liberal.

Further support for the negative relationship is provided in Table 6. In this table the results of a multiple regression analysis of the relationships between support for the three levels of government and television watching and other child and parent demographics are

Table 5. Relationship Between Number of Hours of TV Watched per Day and Feeling for Various Levels of Government

		Controlling For:		
Level of Government	*Simple R*	*Income*	*Race*	*Political Philosophy*
Federal	−.283	−.287*	−.284*	−.288*
State	−.183	−.165*	−.166*	−.167*
City	−.213	−.187*	−.187*	−.189*

Significance of relationship with controls:
* $p \leq .001$.

---

[2] Since 1972 the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations has contracted with Opinion Research Corporation of Princeton, New Jersey, to determine public opinion on the question: "From which level of government do you feel you get the most for your money—federal, state, or local?" This rough measure of political support has generally found race and income particularly associated with feelings toward the various levels. See ACIR (1978).

Table 6. Relationship Between Feeling Thermometers for Three Levels of Government and Various Independent Variables

	Multiple R	*R Square*	*RSQ Change*	*Simple R*
Federal government				
Forced first step				
Income	.029	.001	.001	−.028
Age and youth I	.069	.005	.004	.060
Sex	.074	.005	.001	−.036
Race	.088	.008	.002	−.043
How interested in politics?	.098	.010	.002	−.035
Political & social views	.101	.010	.000'	−.021
Stepwise				
Hours per day TV	.315	.098	.089	−.303
Political & social views	.324	.105	.006	.074
How interested in politics?	.324	.105	.000	−.034
State government				
Forced first step				
Income	.015	.000	.000	.015
Age and youth I	.045	.002	.002	.044
Race	.052	.003	.001	−.032
How interested in politics?	.128	.016	.013	−.113
Political & social views	.134	.018	.002	.034
Stepwise				
Hours per day TV	.231	.053	.035	−.188
Political & social views	.246	.060	.007	.070
How interested in politics?	.249	.062	.002	−.067
City government				
Forced first step				
Income	.053	.003	.003	.053
Age and youth I	.090	.008	.005	.078
Sex	.096	.009	.001	.027
Race	.106	.011	.002	−.059
How interested in politics?	.133	.018	.006	−.095
Political & social views	.134	.018	.000	.017
Stepwise				
Hours per day TV	.234	.055	.037	−.201
Political & social views	.242	.059	.004	.054
How interested in politics?	.250	.062	.004	−.087

shown. The table includes variables concerning the political interest and philosophy of parents. The data were gathered at the same time as the child interview. One parent, randomly selected, was asked to complete a self-administered questionnaire while the teenager was being interviewed. In Table 6 we have used a combination of hierarchical and stepwise regression. Entered first into the regression equation are those variables which are logically and/or temporally prior. These include: age of the adolescent, family income, race, sex, political philosophy of the parent, and political interest of the parent. These variables are simultaneously forced into the equation as the first step. Subsequently, hours of television watching, the teenager's political philosophy, and the teenager's interest in politics are entered stepwise. In this manner, we were able to assess the impact of television over and above the prior variables. In each instance the prior variables explain less than 2 percent of the variance. Hours of television viewing, however, adds a comparatively substantial amount of explained variance: i.e., 8.9 percent for federal government, 3.5 percent for state government, and 3.7 percent for city government.

In Table 7 we have attempted to specify the relationship between TV watching and support for government by looking at the impact of

Table 7. Relationship Between Watching Various Program Types and Feeling for Various Levels of Government

Level of Government	*Simple R*	*Controlling for Income, Race, & Political Philosophy*
Adult entertainment		
Federal	−.207	−.178**
State	−.104	−.099*
City	−.127	−.112**
Juvenile entertainment		
Federal	.073	.098*
State	.161	.150**
City	.122	.116**
Cartoons		
Federal	−.192	−.134**
State	−.085	−.080*
City	−.120	−.111**
News		
Federal	−.183	−.161**
State	−.110	−.098*
City	−.134	−.124**
Public affairs		
Federal	−.018	−.032
State	.003	−.022
City	−.026	−.060
Police shows		
Federal	.007	.026
State	.077	.077
City	−.000	.015

Significance of relationships with controls:
* = $p \leq .05$.
** = $p \leq .01$.

the six program types. The program types can be classified as to whether they have a positive, negative, or no relationship with support for government. Public affairs and police shows fall into the no-impact group. Adult entertainment, news shows and cartoons are negatively related to support. Juvenile entertainment programs, on the other hand, are positively related. The relationships are maintained when income, race, and political philosophy are controlled for.

These are very curious findings which are not subject to easy interpretation. One is left with an unclear choice between whether these are types of programs teenagers with preexisting attitudes watch, or whether there is something in these programs that directly or indirectly influence teenagers' political attitudes. If it is the latter, the data suggest that entertainment programs as well as news programs are providing significant but varying stimuli that condition feelings toward government. Explication of this thesis would require extensive content analysis.

We also examined the relationship of individual programs within a scale to government support. In the case of adult entertainment, cartoons, juvenile entertainment, and public affairs, we found no differences between the scales and the individual programs either in sign or magnitude of effect. However, in the police and news categories we did find variation. The police index masked the differential impact that individual programs have. For example, while "Police Story," "Kojak," and "Police Woman" had a positive relationship with support for government, "Starsky and Hutch" and "Hawaii Five-O" had a negative association. Again, content analysis would be required to interpret this finding.

Table 8. Relationship Between Specific News Shows and Support for Government, Controlling for Income, Race, and Political Philosophy

News Show	*Level of Government*	*Simple R*	*Controlling for: Income, Race, and Political Philosophy*
5:30 P.M. National	Federal	.032	.030
	State	−.029	−.031
	City	−.083	−.084*
6:00 P.M. Local	Federal	−.092	−.097*
	State	−.074	−.076
	City	−.073	−.075
10:00 P.M. Local	Federal	−.191	−.210**
	State	−.137	−.140**
	City	−.147	−.148**

Significance of Relationships with Controls:
* $p \leq .05$.
** $p \leq .05$.

Among the news shows, the 10:00 P.M. locally produced news has by far the largest negative relationship with support for government (see Table 8). The nationally produced news seems to have little or no relationship to support for government, and the local 6:00 P.M. news is related (negatively) only to support for the federal government. These findings are maintained with control variables (Table 8). One possible explanation for the strong correlations between the locally produced 10:00 P.M. news and the negative feelings toward government may be that these programs (there are three) reflect the general antigovernment, particularly antifederal government, climate of opinion in the metropolitan area.[3] The locally produced 6:00 P.M. news may reflect the same bias but perhaps has less general influence on support for government because it directly follows the national network news and is therefore usually confined to local news stories. The 10:00 P.M. news, on the other hand, gives local commentators an opportunity to report on international and national developments as well as events in Arizona. These findings suggest that how local stations report national and international news is a key factor accounting for affective political orientations, and for variations in such orientations from one community to another.

Discussion and Conclusions

The focus of this study has been on the relationship between TV viewing habits of adolescents and their affective orientations toward government. Our data suggest that these habits do not explain a great deal of the variance in support. They do, however, explain more of the variance than a number of other presumably important variables, such as race, family income, and political philosophy. Identification of other independent variables that are associated with feelings toward government awaits further research. Those following this line of inquiry are likely to find it useful to investigate the effects of other socializing agents such as family, peer group, and the school. In regard to the mass media, researchers might explore the possibility that exposure to newspapers is more important than exposure to television in regard not only to informing adolescents and adults about government, but also in shaping affective orientations (Clarke and Fredin, 1978). The effects of exposure to media other than television have not been measured in this study, but should be included in future research. More broadly, future researchers may find that the amount of information in general is related to negative attitudes toward government.

---

[3] These findings about public opinion in Arizona have shown up in a number of studies. One of the most recent of these is by Berman and Merrill (1979).

Though the causal ordering is unclear in this study, future researchers should test the hypothesis that the content of news programs causes or contributes to negative feelings toward government. As indicated above, however, all news programs may not have the same impact. Our analysis suggests that if TV news does produce political malaise in young adults, the chief offenders may be locally prepared newscasts rather than network presentations. Entertainment programs are perhaps best considered as what people with particular feelings about government happen to watch rather than as contributors to these attitudes. On the other hand, one might also speculate that the content of certain entertainment programs produces stimuli which have psychological effects on the viewers, e.g., in shaping their views of human nature, which, in turn, are related to certain affective political orientations. Further studies are needed in these areas which employ panel techniques and content analysis.

References

Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations
1978 Changing Public Attitudes on Government and Taxes. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
Atkin, Charles K., and Walter Gantz
1978 "Television news and political socialization." Public Opinion Quarterly 142: 183–97.
Berman, David, and Bruce D. Merrill
1979 "An analysis of electoral trends and the 1978 election in Arizona." Paper presented to a meeting of the Western Social Science Association, Lake Tahoe, Nevada.
Chaffee, Steven H., Scott Ward, and Leonard Tipton
1970 "Mass communication and political socialization." Journalism Quarterly 47: 647–66.
Clarke, Peter, and Eric Fredin
1978 "Newspapers, television and political reasoning." Public Opinion Quarterly 42: 143–60.
Comstock, George
1975 "The effects of television on children and adolescents: the evidence so far." Journal of Communications 25: 25–34.
Conway, M. Margaret, A. Jay Stevens, and Robert Smith
1975 "The relation between media use and children's civic awareness." Journalism Quarterly 52: 531–38.
Domminick, Joseph R.
1972 "Television and political socialization." Educational Broadcasting Review 6: 48–56.

Hawkins, Robert Parker, Suzanne Pingree, and Donald F. Roberts
1975 "Watergate and political socialization." American Politics Quarterly 3: 406–22.

Hollander, Neil
1971 "Adolescents and the war: the sources of socialization." Journalism Quarterly 48: 472–79.

Miller, Warren E., and Arthur H. Miller
1977 The CPS 1976 American National Election Study. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Center for Political Studies.

Robinson, Michael J.
1976 "Public affairs television and the growth of political malaise: the case of the selling of the president." American Political Science Review 70: 409–32.

Rubin, Alan M.
1976 "Television in children's political socialization." Journal of Broadcasting 20: 51–60.
1978 "Child and adolescent television use and political socialization." Journalism Quarterly 55: 125–29.

Coming in the Next Issue of *Public Opinion Quarterly*

POLLING AND THE NEWS MEDIA: A SYMPOSIUM

Guest Editor: Albert E. Gollin, Vice President, Newspaper Advertising Bureau

Some have decried the upsurge in polling by the media as "horse-race journalism," or as an abuse of media power. Others welcome it as a new kind of news coverage. How did this liaison come about? What does it mean for traditional polling and press coverage? And what are its implications for politics and for democratic theory? These are some of the questions addressed in this special issue of *POQ* by 13 leading pollsters, academic specialists, and media representatives in the United States and Europe:

Irving Crespi
Everett Carll Ladd
Gladys Engel Lang
Kurt Lang
Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann
Robert M. Worcester
C. Anthony Broh
David L. Paletz
David H. Weaver
Maxwell E. McCombs
William Kovach
Nicholas Von Hoffman
Albert E. Gollin

Subscribe now and receive the expanded Winter issue—Volume 44, Number 4—of *POQ*. (Use the subscription coupon in this issue.) Single copies may be ordered from: Subscription Department, Elsevier North Holland, Inc., 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

Images of Social Groups: Categorical or Qualified?

MARY R. JACKMAN AND MARY SCHEUER SENTER

THE WAY people assign personality traits to social groups has been of central concern to students of racial prejudice, social class ideology, and sex roles. Images of blacks and whites, various social classes, and women and men reflect the cognitive meaning of group labels, thus shaping people's expectations about individual group members. Such expectations, in turn, provide the cognitive foundation for social policies and practices that affect the life chances of individual group members and the pattern of relations between groups.

Most serious in its implications is the outright categorical description of a group. A person who thinks that *all* women are emotional, or that *no* blacks are dependable, or that *all* poor people are lazy is interpreting group membership in the most constraining way possible. Such categorical, unqualified perceptions carry no expectation of individual variation within groups. Nonetheless, such perceptions are

---

Abstract This paper makes a direct empirical assessment of the way Americans go about describing social groups in three important intergroup contexts—race, gender, and social class. Results from a national survey indicate that when respondents are given the opportunity to express themselves in a relatively unconstrained format, qualified images of groups generally prevail over categorical descriptions. Further, the amount and pattern of categorical thinking vary considerably across the three intergroup contexts, reflecting the different kinds of group images that underly race, gender, and social class relations.

Mary R. Jackman is an Associate Professor of Sociology and a Faculty Associate of the Survey Research Center, University of Michigan. Mary Scheuer Senter is an Instructor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, Central Michigan University. The authors would like to thank Robert W. Jackman, Joan Huber, Anne Adams, and an anonymous referee for their helpful comments, and Suzanne Purcell and Maria Kousis for their assistance. This research was supported by grants from the National Institute for Mental Health (MH-26433) and the National Science Foundation (SOC 75-00405).

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University

Published by Elsevier North-Holland, Inc.

0033-362X/80/0044-341/$1.75

thought to be pervasive and widespread (Katz and Braly, 1947; Centers, 1951; Ehrlich, 1962, 1973:32; Williams, 1964:36, 41; Karlins et al., 1969; Eldridge, 1979:22–27), and their analysis has been central to the study of intergroup beliefs and stereotypes. Indeed, most definitions of a stereotype include categorical thinking as a critical element (Fishman, 1956; Richter, 1956; Vinacke, 1957; Allport, 1958; Secord, 1959; Koenig and King, 1964; Williams, 1964; Campbell, 1967; Harding et al., 1969; Tajfel, 1969; Cauthen et al., 1971; Brigham, 1971; Mackie, 1973).

While the categorical description of groups has been a central concern of past research, standard measures have assumed rather than demonstrated its existence. Analysts have constrained respondents to express their beliefs about group traits in categorical terms, and have then inferred that categorical thinking is endemic to intergroup perceptions. In addition, most research on trait attribution to social groups has relied on select subsamples (generally college students), so that we know relatively little about the nature of trait attribution among a cross-section of the general public.

In this study, we report on a new measure of beliefs about group traits that was administered in a national probability survey of the United States. A more sensitive reflection than past measures of how personality traits are assigned to social groups, our measure is applied to the images of race, gender, and social class groups held by blacks and whites, women and men, and people from four subjectively defined social classes, respectively. The results of our analysis belie the common conclusion that categorical images of social groups are pervasive and widespread. Instead, they yield useful and suggestive data on the varied extent to which different social groups are described in categorical or qualified terms.

Categorical Thinking: Central Issues

Many analysts consider the tendency to simplify and classify the world as fundamental to perception as well as a functional coping mechanism for bringing some order to the confusion of reality (Lippman, 1922; Allport, 1958; Tajfel, 1969; Ehrlich, 1973:38). In the context of intergroup beliefs, this process is believed to become exaggerated and emotionally invested. The categorical perception of groups "provides the mold which gives shape to intergroup attitudes" (Tajfel, 1969:91). Stereotype assignments become "the language of prejudice" (Ehrlich, 1973:21). The categorical attribution of traits to social groups is regarded as invidious for two reasons.

One line of reasoning stresses that any perception that unequivocally lumps all the members of a group into one unvaried category is intrinsically invidious because it credits group membership with an overwhelming role in determining individual personality characteristics, and because it provides the perfect grounding for discriminatory policies and practices. Most important, however, the categorical description of a group represents a closed and insensitive perception that routinely pigeonholes group members and leaves the perceiver unreceptive to contrary evidence, which is either overlooked or dismissed as a mere "exception." Categorical descriptions of groups are thus seen as inherently "inaccurate" and irrational (Lippmann, 1922; Richter, 1956; Allport, 1958; Williams, 1964:36; Ehrlich, 1973; Mackie, 1973; Tajfel, 1969; 1978).

According to a second line of reasoning, the invidiousness of categorical images of groups stems from the unqualified attribution of *positive* traits to one's own group and *negative* qualities to other groups. Perceptions that reflect ethnocentrism and prejudice assert one group's monopoly of "good" traits and another group's monopoly of "bad" traits (Vinacke, 1957; Allport, 1958; Williams, 1964:40; Campbell, 1967; Harding, 1968; Tajfel, 1969; 1978; Eldridge, 1979:23–27).

These two approaches to categorical thinking need not be mutually exclusive, nor have they always been. In general, however, the two concerns have guided alternative analytic strategies. According to the first approach, the implicit irrationality and inaccuracy of undifferentiated perceptions make them more probable when the object is a group other than one's own. Empirical studies in this vein have measured people's perceptions of groups to which they do not belong (generally "minority" groups) and have been concerned about the attribution of both positive and negative traits.[1] The second approach, however, does not imply that groups other than one's own are any more likely to be described categorically. Measures reflecting this approach thus seek people's assignment of *differently valued* personality traits to their own and other groups.

From these concerns, two standard measures of beliefs about group traits have developed, one using *agree-disagree categorical statements*, and the other using a *stereotype checklist*. The former, prevalent in cross-sectional surveys, presents respondents with categorical statements about the trait attributes of a group (such as "poor people are lazy," "blacks are musical"), and respondents can express agreement or disagreement with these statements (Adorno et al., 1950; Deutsch and Collins, 1951; Wilner et al., 1955; Marx, 1969; Selznick and Steinberg, 1969). The most frequently replicated research on trait attribution to groups, however, has used the stereotype checklist, usually administered to small samples of select subgroups (generally college undergraduates). This measure presents respondents with a long list of traits and instructs them to assign the traits to specific groups; the positive or negative values attached to the traits are often obtained from another group of respondents (Meenes, 1943; Katz and Braly, 1947; Gilbert, 1951; Sherriffs and McKee, 1957; Karlins et al., 1969; Broverman et al., 1972; Smedley and Bayton, 1978).

---

[1] An extreme example of a belief item that reflects this perspective is found in Wilner et al. (1955:62): "There may be a few exceptions, but in general, Negroes are pretty much alike." A similar item is found in the Ethnocentrism scale of Adorno et al. (1950).

These two standard measures share one important feature—they both constrain respondents to express themselves in categorical, all-or-none terms, thereby precluding the expression of qualified beliefs.[2] Because of this constraint, these measures cannot reflect the degree to which people do in fact think about groups in a categorical or qualified way. As early as 1954, Harding et al. pointed out that standard stereotype measures do not differentiate between respondents who are indeed ignoring individual differences and those who are merely making a statistical generalization (see also Hyman, 1969:10; Brigham, 1971). The interest of analysts in this specific issue has exacerbated the problem by encouraging interpretations that far outstrip the information yielded by these measures. Thus, it is commonly assumed that respondents who agree with the statement that "blacks are lazy" think that *all* blacks are lazy. Similarly, the very name of the "stereotype checklist" carries the clear assumption that, in requiring respondents to label groups with traits, the analyst has captured categorical thinking.

The categorical phrasing of the measures not only restricts the information they can yield, but it may also make them more susceptible to response bias effects. The blatant character of the task may cue some respondents (especially the well educated) to social desirability pressures, and make them unwilling to present their beliefs in an unfavorable light.[3] Meanwhile, other respondents with simpler cogni-

[2] Different aspects of this problem have been addressed by Ehrlich (1964), Ehrlich and Rinehart (1965), Bayton et al. (1956), and Smedley and Bayton (1978). However, none of the procedures suggested in these studies addresses the issue of measuring directly respondents' perceptions of the internal homogeneity/heterogeneity of groups. Procedures used by Broverman et al. (1972) did allow respondents to make finer distinctions between men and women; unfortunately, these distinctions were ignored in the variables subsequently created.

[3] Some evidence of this is provided by the replications of the original Katz and Braly design among Princeton undergraduates. Gilbert (1951) and Karlins et al. (1969) report that many subjects protested the unreasonableness of making such simplistic generalizations.

tive styles (especially the poorly educated) may be trapped by the loaded and unbalanced construction of the measure into saying "yes" or into labeling groups with traits because these response options are "near enough."[4]

As a consequence of the restricted measurement of beliefs about group traits, central issues underlying their analysis have not been addressed empirically. Fundamental questions about the way people perceive the trait attributes of social groups remain unanswered. First, and most important, we lack direct evidence on the *extent* to which people's images of social groups are categorical or qualified. Standard measures have been constructed in a way that reduces and simplifies (and possibly distorts) the potential variance in beliefs that is their prime concern. Second, we lack critical information on the *pattern* of categorical thinking. Is categorical thinking more evident when people are describing groups other than their own, or do people tend to describe their own group in positive categorical terms and other groups in negative categorical terms? In other words, are categorical descriptions used to differentiate the homogeneity of another group from the individual variance within one's own group ("*they* are all alike"), or to maximize the difference between the bad qualities of the other group and the good qualities of one's own group ("they are all bad, we are all good")? Without information on the pattern of categorical perceptions, we cannot assess whether those perceptions have intrinsic significance, or are significant because the traits ascribed to one group are valued differently from those attributed to another group.

Data Source and Measures

The data reported in this paper are part of a larger study of intergroup attitudes and group consciousness, and were gathered from a probability sample of adults aged 18 and over residing in households in the 48 contiguous United States. Personal interviews with 1,914 respondents were conducted by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan during the fall of 1975.[5]

Membership in race and gender groups was determined by interviewer observation. For race, interviewers reported whether respondents were white, black, or from one of a number of other racial-ethnic groups. These other racial-ethnic groups are included in the base *N* in analyses of beliefs about gender and class groups, but the analysis of beliefs about race groups includes only respondents who are either black or white.[6] Social class membership was determined by responses to the following class identification question, which was asked early in the interview: "People talk about social classes such as the poor, the working class, the middle class, the upper-middle class, and the upper class. Which of these classes would you say you belong to?"

---

[4] Ehrlich has argued that "the statement 'Atheists are cynical' may be correctly transliterated 'All atheists are cynical' " (1973:21). However (and apart from the difference between *acquiescing* to such a statement and spontaneously *making* it), this argument ignores differing cognitive styles. Some respondents (especially the poorly educated) are less wary of simple statements and therefore express themselves less precisely than others (Campbell et al., 1960; Jackman, 1973).

[5] The response rate was just under 70 percent, which is within the normal range for national surveys conducted by the Survey Research Center in recent years.

The validity and subjective meaning of this measure are discussed elsewhere (Jackman, 1979).[7] The percentage identifying with each of the social classes is as follows: poor, 7.6 percent; working class, 36.6 percent; middle class, 43.3 percent; upper-middle class, 8.2 percent; upper class, 1.0 percent. Only 3.5 percent of the respondents were unable or unwilling to place themselves in a class, or gave other responses. Note that because only 19 respondents identified with the upper class, the *N* for this group is too small to yield reliable inferences. Hence, although responses of the upper class identifiers are presented in the tables, they are not discussed. Of course, the beliefs of respondents from other classes *about* the upper class can be analyzed.

The beliefs of and about these race, gender, and social class groups were measured. Our measure of trait attribution was designed to maximize information on the degree to which people describe their own and other social groups in categorical or qualified terms, while minimizing social desirability and other response set pressures. Supplemental information was gathered on the evaluative connotations of the traits that people were asked to assign to groups.

The items on perception of group traits were contained in a self-administered booklet, which the interviewer introduced as follows:

> There are many groups in America and people have different opinions about what these groups are like. This booklet contains a list of some of the ways groups are described. In each case, you are asked how many people in various groups you would say are like this. The more people you think are like this, the *higher* the number you should choose from the scale at the top of

---

[6] Every effort was made to match the race of interviewer and respondent. In addition, the items that would be most sensitive to interviewer effects were self-administered. A reanalysis of all the data reported in this paper, excluding the 36 blacks interviewed by whites and the 6 whites interviewed by blacks, does not alter the results.

[7] The main advantage of a subjective measure of class membership over a measure based on an objective criterion such as educational attainment, occupational status, or income is that it allows us to treat class in broader terms than would be encompassed by any single objective criterion.

the page—the fewer people you think are like this, the *lower* the number you should choose.

This doesn't need to take much time. We're just interested in your first reaction of these questions.

There were 32 questions of the following form in the booklet: "How many (*group*) would you say are (*trait*)?" For example, "How many women would you say are emotional?" Questions were grouped by trait, with the question about the subordinate group directly preceding the question about the respective dominant group (a given question about blacks preceded the one about whites, and so on). Each trait was introduced by a subheading and a definition of the trait in parentheses. Respondents selected their responses from a nine-point scale extending from left to right and printed at the top of each page of the booklet, and they recorded responses in the box next to each question.[8] The lefthand pole of the scale was labeled 0 (*none*), and the righthand pole was labeled 8 (*all*). The intervals between were marked 1 to 7; no labels were attached to them. Attention was drawn to the midpoint of the scale by short vertical lines above and below the 4. Respondents were also provided explicitly with a "don't know" response option: to the right of the scale was written "X = *don't know*."

The fact that the trait booklet is self-administered should maximize the respondent's sense of privacy and reduce social pressures, even though it is embedded in a face-to-face interview schedule.[9] The construction of the items also presents no obvious source of bias, since a variety of response options (including "don't know") are presented in an equally balanced way.

We selected traits for the items on the basis of three criteria: their prominence in the literature on presumed race, gender, and social class characteristics; their policy significance; and their ready comprehension and common interpretation by a cross-section of the population that includes people with widely varying levels of education and life experiences. In this way, we selected the following traits: for race, *intelligent* (or bright), *lazy* (or *not* hard-working), and *dependable* (or reliable); for gender, *intelligent, emotional* (or quick to show feelings), and *talkative* (or talk a lot); for class, *intelligent, lazy,*

---

[8] Brigham (1971) has suggested that respondents be asked to indicate what *percentage* of a group they think has some trait. However, we found in a pretest that this format elicited a large number of response-set answers where respondents repeated the same percentage throughout the booklet.

[9] To increase the respondents' sense of privacy and to reduce social pressures further, interviewers were instructed to keep busy with other editing tasks while the respondent was completing the booklet, and to put the booklet into an envelope as soon as the respondent was finished with it.

selfish (or concerned only with one's own problems), and *thrifty* (or careful with money).[10]

The administration of the trait attribution booklet went very smoothly. Of the 1,914 people in the sample, only 42 (or 2.2 percent) did not answer the booklet at all. The mean time spent on the booklet was 6.7 minutes; the median was 5 minutes, and the range was 1 to 36 minutes. Response set problems are not apparent. In a check for blatant response set we counted the number of times each numerical response was repeated throughout the booklet. The middle category on the scale (the 4's) was used most often; however, even here, only 5 respondents used this response exclusively, and only 68 respondents used this response 21 times or more over the 32 questions. The "don't know" response was chosen for all 32 items in the booklet by only 20 respondents; 69 respondents gave this response 21 or more times. No other points on the scale were used more than 23 times by any respondent. (We may assume that these counts constitute an upper-bound estimate of this kind of response set since we cannot separate out content-free repetition from "true" responses.)

In addition to the trait attributions themselves, we gathered data on the evaluative connotations of the traits involved, with an independent measure of the respondent's evaluation of each of the traits used in the booklet. This information is critical to the assessment and interpretation of the pattern of categorical thinking about social groups. The items on the evaluative overlay of the traits were administered 34 pages after the booklet itself in the interview schedule.

> I am going to read a list of things people use to describe each other. For each one, I am going to ask how much you generally like or dislike people like this. Here is a scale that ranges from 1 for "dislike very much" to 9 for "like very much." For each characteristic I read, please tell me the number that comes closest to how you feel.
>
> How much do you like or dislike *lazy* people?

The question was repeated for the remaining six traits used in the trait booklet. The poles of the scale that was shown to respondents were labeled as described above, and the midpoint of the scale (5) was labeled "neither dislike nor like." The mean evaluations of the traits vary considerably, with dependable people being liked the most and selfish people being disliked the most. The mean scores (and standard deviations) for each of the evaluation items are as follows: dependable, 8.20 (1.16); intelligent, 7.24 (1.56); thrifty, 6.84 (1.69); talkative,

---

[10] Other traits were pretested, but they proved unsatisfactory, either because of poor respondent comprehension (e.g., logical for gender) or because they seemed to produce discomfort/evasiveness (e.g., musical for race).

5.46 (1.84); emotional, 4.71 (1.62); lazy, 2.31 (1.57); and selfish, 2.23 (1.49). The evaluation of the traits does not vary systematically by group or by responses to the trait attribution items.

Analysis

There are three, successively broader ways that we may measure categorical thinking, and our analysis makes use of all three. The first defines it strictly in terms of the extreme responses at either end of the scale, that is, the responses that "all" or "none" of the members of a group have some trait.[11] This definition is closely in accord with the notion that there is an important qualitative distinction between the sweeping perception of *no variance* within a group and the perception of *any amount* of variance, no matter how limited. The second measure also makes a qualitative distinction between categorical and noncategorical thinking, but it broadens the definition of the former to include responses that describe a group in "almost all" or "almost none" terms (that is, the 7's and 1's on our scale). This less restrictive definition concedes that some people who are unwilling to describe a group in absolutely categorical terms may nevertheless recognize such restricted variance in the group that the implications are no different from an absolutely categorical response. Group members who do not fit the group's stereotype are characterized by such people as "exceptions" that leave unchallenged their overall perception of the group (Allport, 1958). Our third approach to the assessment of categorical thinking couches it in more continuous terms: we become concerned with the extent to which people's descriptions of groups are stated in moderate or extreme language. Here, we inspect people's use of the entire scale to determine the degree of internal variance people recognize in different social groups.

Tables 1, 2, and 3 present data for race, gender, and social class, respectively. Tables 1 and 2 report the percentage distributions and mean scores for the trait items, by group, while Table 3 reports only the tails of the distributions and the mean scores, owing to space limitations. In reading the tables, note that for each trait item (e.g., "How many blacks would you say are intelligent?"), the first column records the responses of one group (blacks), and the second column records the responses of the other group (whites).

---

[11] It is important to remember that both *inclusive* and *exclusive* categorical descriptions are of interest. With positively valued traits, a categorically exclusive description amounts to an unequivocal, negative statement (e.g., "No blacks are dependable" is equivalent to "All blacks are undependable"); with negatively valued traits, a categorically exclusive description amounts to an unequivocal, positive statement (e.g., "No poor people are selfish" implies "All poor people are unselfish").

Table 1. Percentage Distributions and Means for Race Trait Items, for Blacks and Whites

	Intelligent				*Dependable*				*Lazy*			
Trait Item	*Blacks Intelligent*		*Whites Intelligent*		*Blacks Dependable*		*Whites Dependable*		*Blacks Lazy*		*Whites Lazy*	
Score	*Blacks*	*Whites*	*Blacks*	*Whites*	*Blacks*	*Whites*	*Blacks*	*Whites*	*Blacks*	*Whites*	*Blacks*	*Whites*
None	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.5%	1.3%	1.1%	0.1%	1.6%	0.3%	0.0%	0.4%
1	0.0	1.4	1.1	0.0	0.0	3.2	2.6	0.1	1.1	1.4	2.1	1.8
2	0.5	7.0	0.5	0.7	3.2	9.6	2.1	1.1	8.0	6.8	5.3	9.7
3	1.6	16.2	2.7	1.8	6.8	15.6	7.9	3.9	14.4	13.5	10.2	16.7
4	18.3	33.9	18.2	23.5	25.3	35.4	21.6	32.6	32.6	31.0	29.4	39.5
5	10.8	14.2	10.2	22.2	15.8	12.1	15.8	21.4	13.4	12.0	15.0	13.2
6	28.5	11.2	26.2	28.0	20.5	9.1	21.1	25.2	8.0	12.3	11.2	7.0
7	21.0	2.9	21.4	12.5	8.9	2.4	7.4	7.4	6.4	7.6	9.6	2.1
All	9.7	1.6	8.0	3.3	7.9	0.8	7.4	2.3	2.7	3.9	2.7	0.4
Don't know	9.7	11.0	11.2	8.0	11.1	10.6	13.2	6.0	11.8	11.2	14.4	9.2
N^a	186	1,594	187	1,598	190	1,601	190	1,605	187	1,596	187	1,595
$\bar{X}^b$	5.85	4.17	5.69	5.37	5.12	3.89	4.98	5.03	4.22	4.48	4.58	3.91

[a] Base *N* excludes missing data.

[b] Means calculated with DK's excluded. Scale ranges from 0 to 8.

Table 2. Percentage Distributions and Means for Gender Trait Items, for Women and Men

Trait Item	*Emotional*				*Talkative*				*Intelligent*			
	Women Emotional		*Men Emotional*		*Women Talkative*		*Men Talkative*		*Women Intelligent*		*Men Intelligent*	
Score	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
None	0.1%	0.0%	0.6%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.5%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
1	0.1	0.3	1.2	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0
2	0.6	1.2	4.2	5.0	0.7	1.4	2.7	2.8	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.3
3	1.7	2.2	11.0	10.6	2.5	3.5	6.7	10.6	1.4	3.8	1.8	2.1
4	11.2	11.5	31.3	31.9	20.7	24.0	36.2	40.6	22.7	26.0	21.6	25.1
5	10.4	10.2	20.9	22.4	14.0	12.7	18.5	20.0	20.9	19.6	17.4	20.0
6	24.3	24.4	15.5	15.0	23.4	24.8	15.2	14.0	29.1	28.7	29.3	30.9
7	29.6	31.2	6.3	5.4	18.2	16.5	8.4	5.6	13.0	11.8	16.8	13.1
All	17.8	14.5	3.7	3.7	17.3	13.8	7.9	2.9	4.5	4.0	5.3	3.3
Don't know	4.4	4.6	5.2	4.7	2.8	2.9	3.3	2.7	7.3	5.4	7.2	5.3
N[a]	1,079	782	1,077	781	1,081	782	1,082	784	1,074	780	1,075	780
$\bar{X}$[b]	6.25	6.15	4.63	4.62	5.84	5.64	4.94	4.59	5.42	5.30	5.55	5.39

[a] Base *N* excludes missing data.

[b] Means calculated with DK's excluded. Scale ranges from 0 to 8.

Table 3. Tails of Percentage Distributions and Mean Scores for Class Trait Items, for the Five Subjective Social Classes

Trait Item Score	*Poor Intelligent*					*Working Intelligent*					*Middle Intelligent*		
	Poor[a]	*Work*[b]	*Mid*[c]	*UpMid*[d]	*Upper*[e]	*Poor*	*Work*	*Mid*	*UpMid*	*Upper*	*Poor*	*Work*	*Mid*
None/1	4.4	5.3	5.3	7.7	16.7	1.5	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
All/7	14.0	7.1	4.8	2.5	0.0	27.4	14.1	8.3	5.2	5.6	28.7	17.4	15.4
Don't know	15.4	8.5	9.7	9.0	5.6	14.1	5.0	6.9	6.5	5.6	14.0	6.2	5.9
$\bar{x}^f$	4.64	3.96	3.68	3.55	3.35	5.53	5.09	4.70	4.40	4.53	5.79	5.49	5.37
	Poor Selfish					*Working Selfish*					*Middle Selfish*		
None/1	13.3	14.1	12.2	3.3	11.2	5.8	5.3	4.5	1.2	11.1	5.1	2.2	3.8
All/7	11.7	6.2	5.4	7.2	27.8	9.5	4.9	3.8	5.8	5.6	13.3	7.5	4.7
Don't know	12.5	10.9	12.3	17.0	22.2	14.7	8.1	9.9	13.6	22.2	16.2	10.1	9.6
$\bar{x}$	3.58	3.39	3.38	3.81	4.57	3.88	3.79	3.82	4.15	4.21	4.39	4.30	4.07
	Poor Thrifty					*Working Thrifty*					*Middle Thrifty*		
None/1	7.3	8.0	8.3	9.6	5.3	2.2	0.8	0.9	0.6	0.0	0.7	1.1	0.6
All/7	26.4	13.1	9.7	7.1	21.1	28.5	19.5	12.7	9.6	21.0	23.5	12.0	13.8
Don't know	9.6	5.6	6.4	8.3	21.1	8.8	2.2	4.3	7.1	5.3	11.8	2.9	3.8
$\bar{x}$	4.76	4.23	3.93	3.67	4.40	5.33	5.15	4.81	4.70	5.28	5.22	4.81	4.98
	Poor Lazy					*Working Lazy*					*Middle Lazy*		
None/1	6.7	5.5	3.8	3.2	11.1	11.8	9.5	5.6	1.9	5.6	6.7	6.8	5.3
All/7	11.1	13.3	9.0	13.5	11.2	9.5	5.8	1.1	0.6	0.0	6.6	3.6	3.0
Don't know	14.8	7.0	8.1	11.0	11.1	16.2	4.5	5.9	9.0	5.6	20.0	6.3	5.7
$\bar{x}$	4.03	4.29	4.15	4.43	4.44	3.75	3.57	3.57	3.68	3.88	4.03	3.73	3.61

Table 3. *(Continued)*

Trait Item	*Middle Intelligent*		*Upper-Middle intelligent*					*Upper Intelligent*				
Score	*UpMid*	*Upper*	*Poor*	*Work*	*Mid*	*UpMid*	*Upper*	*Poor*	*Work*	*Mid*	*UpMid*	*Upper*
None/1	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.6	0.0	1.4	0.5	0.0	0.6	0.0
All/7	12.3	22.2	45.6	38.2	31.2	27.2	33.4	50.0	50.1	46.1	42.9	55.6
Don't know	5.8	5.6	12.7	7.0	5.5	5.2	5.6	13.2	8.5	6.8	6.5	5.6
$\bar{x}_f$	5.26	5.23	6.11	6.06	5.92	5.86	6.06	6.25	6.37	6.26	6.17	6.47
	Middle Selfish		*Upper-Middle Selfish*					*Upper Selfish*				
None/1	0.6	11.1	6.6	2.4	2.9	0.6	5.6	8.1	3.0	3.1	1.2	11.2
All/7	8.4	5.6	23.0	16.2	10.3	13.6	11.1	26.7	32.5	21.8	22.7	16.7
Don't know	11.7	22.2	17.0	10.3	10.1	11.7	22.2	18.5	10.6	11.2	13.0	22.2
$\bar{x}$	4.44	4.14	4.80	4.90	4.56	4.68	4.50	4.99	5.40	4.91	4.95	4.50
	Middle Thrifty		*Upper-Middle Thrifty*					*Upper Thrifty*				
None/1	0.0	0.0	2.2	3.3	3.1	0.6	0.0	10.9	11.2	9.5	7.7	0.0
All/7	9.0	21.1	30.9	18.1	15.4	18.5	31.6	37.2	27.1	23.8	19.9	31.6
Don't know	7.1	5.3	16.2	5.7	5.5	7.1	5.3	17.5	7.6	6.6	8.3	5.3
$\bar{x}$	4.83	5.33	5.29	4.71	4.63	4.90	5.05	5.23	4.66	4.43	4.55	5.33
	Middle Lazy		*Upper-Middle Lazy*					*Upper Lazy*				
None/1	3.2	5.6	8.9	7.7	5.5	8.4	5.6	9.0	10.1	10.2	11.7	11.8
All/7	1.3	0.0	8.9	8.1	5.7	3.9	5.6	16.5	13.2	10.2	7.1	0.0
Don't know	8.4	5.6	19.3	8.4	8.4	9.1	5.6	20.9	10.0	8.9	10.4	5.9
$\bar{x}$	3.58	3.76	4.05	3.92	3.73	3.46	3.65	4.32	4.05	3.84	3.62	3.50

[a] Poor *N* ranges from 134 to 137.

[b] Working class *N* ranges from 678 to 683.

[c] Middle class *N* ranges from 805 to 815.

[d] Upper-middle class *N* ranges from 153 to 156.

[e] Upper class *N* ranges from 17 to 19.

[f] Means calculated with DK's excluded. Scale ranges from 0 to 8.

RACE

Few blacks or whites describe either their own or the other racial group in categorical terms: the recognition of variation within the two groups is considerably more prevalent. Further, to the extent that there is any categorical thinking in black-white relations, it shows little evidence of either of the patterns that have disturbed past investigators. It is the subordinate group that is more likely to have categorical perceptions,[12] and blacks are about equally likely to have such perceptions of either their own or the dominant group. Whites are more likely to describe the two groups differentially in a self-flattering way, but they are less likely to rely on categorical descriptions of either group.

Fewer than 10 percent of the blacks or 4 percent of the whites state that *all* the members of either racial group possess any trait (and virtually no blacks or whites absolutely deny the presence of a trait in either racial group). In fact, both blacks and whites are somewhat more likely to express uncertainty about how much either racial group is characterized by a trait than to describe either group in absolutely categorical terms.[13] If categorical attributions are defined more broadly to include the responses that almost all the members of a group have a trait, the pattern is not seriously altered. About 30 percent of blacks attribute the trait *intelligent* to all or almost all blacks and whites, but only between 9 and 17 percent attribute the traits *dependable* or *lazy* to either group in such a fashion. Whites are again less likely than blacks to attribute traits sweepingly to either racial group, but they have a pattern of making sweeping attributions of the positive traits more frequently to their own group and the negative trait more frequently to blacks.

Examination of the overall pattern of responses confirms these observations. Blacks describe both groups in parallel fashion, with most blacks attributing the trait *intelligent* to more than half, *dependable* to at least half, and *lazy* to between just under and just over half of both groups. Whites essentially agree with blacks about the extent to which whites are endowed with the positive traits and blacks with the negative trait (even though they are less likely to make categorical attributions), but they attribute the positive traits less generously to blacks and the negative trait more equivocally to whites.

---

[12] This and all subsequent inferences are based on the size of the percentage differences between groups. Because of the large sample N, even substantively trivial differences can attain statistical significance (which makes the latter a weak test criterion).

[13] Uncertainty about how to describe a group might be seen as diametrically opposed to the categorical description of a group. Indeed, certainty is often included in definitions of a stereotype (Lippmann, 1922; Richter, 1956; Hardening et al., 1969).

GENDER

The gender context is marked by the relative frequency with which categorical images of women are held. The manner in which the sexes are described does not conform, however, to either of the patterns of categorical thinking that have been broached in the literature. Women as well as men express the belief that there is more variation among men than among women in the "female" traits *emotional* and *talkative*. Further, these traits have an evaluative overlay that is neither sharply negative nor positive, but which ranges from mild negative through neutral to mild positive.

The trait *intelligent* elicits few categorical descriptions of either sex, but the traits *emotional* and *talkative* are attributed to all women by about one in six respondents. If one includes the 7's on the scale, one finds that about one-sixth to one-fifth of the respondents think that all or almost all men and women are intelligent, but about one-third of both sexes believe that all or almost all women are talkative, and almost as many as half of both sexes make such sweeping statements about the number of women who are emotional. Consistent with these results is the low amount of uncertainty that is expressed when people are asked to describe the sexes.

Turning to the overall distribution of responses, one finds that between half and three-quarters of both sexes are commonly believed to be intelligent, but that more women than men are characterized as emotional and talkative. Most people of either sex believe that well over half of women are talkative and at least three-quarters of women are emotional. Both sexes agree that there is considerably more variation among men in those two traits, with most of these responses bunched in the central portion of the scale.

SOCIAL CLASS

Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the class context is that the two highest social classes are described in categorical terms relatively frequently. The upper class is described categorically about as often as are women, with the upper-middle class not far behind. While categorical attributions are generally more prevalent than categorical denials, the class context is unique in that the latter are made by more than a handful of people. Thus, there is somewhat less consensus than there is in descriptions of women about the *way* in which the upper and upper-middle classes are homogeneous.

Again, there is little support for either of the patterns of categorical thinking alluded to in the literature. Instead, we find a weaker version of the pattern found in the race context. Poor people are somewhat more likely than people from other classes to attribute traits categorically to *all* classes (including their own), especially positive traits. As with blacks' images of blacks and whites, poor people's categorical perceptions of classes appear to be part of an attempt to equalize the classes. As with whites' perceptions of the race groups, people from higher classes are more likely to draw class distinctions but less likely to frame categorical images of the classes.

All or almost all upper class people are thought to be intelligent by as many as about half of the poor, to be thrifty by over one-third of the poor, to be selfish by about one-quarter of the poor, and to be lazy by about one-sixth of the poor.[14] The proportion of the poor making such sweeping attributions to the upper-middle class is only somewhat lower. People from other social classes are almost as likely as the poor to attribute traits to all or almost all of the upper class,[15] but considerably less likely to make such sweeping attributions to the upper-middle class. A considerably smaller proportion of people from any class perceive the other three classes in categorical terms, although the poor remain more likely than others to do so. The greater tendency of the poor to make categorical trait attributions is tempered by their considerably higher expression of uncertainty. When asked to describe any class, between about one-tenth and one-fifth of the poor say "don't know," whereas people from other classes give this response with approximately the same frequency as in the race context. Turning to the categorical denials, we find that about one-tenth of the poor think that no or almost no upper class people are thrifty, selfish, or lazy. Such descriptions are not restricted to the upper class, nor are the poor systematically more likely to use them.

It is only between the poor and other classes that one finds systematic disagreements in the typical images held of the classes.[16] These disagreements should be seen against the backdrop of the overall ranking of the classes on the four traits. In general, the proportion of intelligent people (positive value) and selfish people (negative value) is thought to increase incrementally from the poor through to the upper class. The poor are generally thought to have the highest proportion of lazy people (negative value) and the lowest proportion of thrifty people (positive value), with the *upper* class ranked next on both the latter traits, and with the other three classes ranked fairly indistinguishably from one another.[17]

---

[14] For purposes of simplicity, discussion here is based on our second measure of categorical thinking. As with race and gender, "pure" categorical thinking is generally less prevalent than "almost all" or "almost none" statements, but the pattern of results is not altered by separate consideration of "all" or "none" descriptions.

[15] In fact, people from all classes are about equally likely to attribute the two traits *intelligent* and *selfish* to the upper class.

[16] For purposes of simplicity, we restrict discussion here to means rather than percentage ranges.

The pattern of between-class disagreements about class images is a weaker version of the pattern of disagreement between blacks and whites. Respondents from all classes typically think that the proportion of selfish people in each class gradually increases from fewer than half of the poor to almost two-thirds of the upper class. However, there is some tendency for the poor to think that there are fewer lazy people among the poor and more lazy people in the other classes than do other respondents; these disagreements are never large (all the mean scores hover around the middle of the scale), but they are most pronounced in describing the upper class. In addition, the poor typically think that there are more intelligent and more thrifty people in all of the social classes than do other respondents. With these two positively valued traits, the between-class disagreements tend to be somewhat larger, and they become further pronounced in descriptions of the poor. Respondents from all classes typically think that over three-quarters of the upper class are intelligent, but while the poor think that well over half of their own class is intelligent, other respondents typically believe that this trait characterizes fewer than half of the poor. Respondents from the poor typically think that about two-thirds of each of the other classes and well over half of their own class are thrifty, while respondents from the other classes are typically less likely to attribute this trait to any class (especially to classes other than their own).

Summary and Conclusions

In this paper we have made a direct empirical assessment of the way Americans go about describing social groups in three important intergroup contexts—race, gender, and social class. Our results from a national survey indicate that several presumptions that have been made about this phenomenon are without support. First, when respondents are given the opportunity to express themselves in a relatively unconstrained format, qualified images of groups generally prevail over categorical descriptions. Second, the pattern of categorical images does not conform to either of the patterns that have traditionally been regarded as cause for social concern. There is no systematic tendency for people to see their own group as heterogeneous and other groups as homogeneous. Nor is there a pattern of people giving their own group a monopoly of positive qualities and other groups a monopoly of negative qualities. The only pattern that is evident in more than one intergroup situation is for the subordinate group (blacks, and to a lesser extent poor people) to make categorical attributions of positive traits to both their own and the other group(s) more frequently, in an apparent attempt to equalize the groups. At the same time, to the extent that people seek to perceive their own group in a flattering light and the other group(s) in a negative light (whites and higher social classes), this is relatively unlikely to be done via categorical images.

---

[17] There is a small but consistent tendency for members of the working, middle, and upper-middle classes to have self-flattering perceptions of their own class as the most thrifty and the least lazy.

On the other hand, our analyses suggest that not all groups are equally likely to be seen as internally heterogeneous, and this variance throws light on the character of intergroup relations in the three contexts of race, gender, and social class. The two groups that are most likely to be described in categorical terms are one subordinate group, women, and one dominant group, the upper class, with a third group, the upper-middle class, not too far behind. That the upper class and, to a lesser extent, the upper-middle class are seen as homogeneous by a relatively large proportion of people is, perhaps, not surprising. Both classes, but especially the upper class, constitute small, select, elite groups within which people clearly do not expect to find the same degree of heterogeneity as in the rest of the population.

That women should be seen as homogeneous, with more consensus than with any other group, is more disturbing. Not only do women make up about half of the population, but they comprise, demographically, socioeconomically, and politically, a cross section of the population. The gender context is also marked by a comparatively high level of intimacy between groups. That women are nevertheless seen as homogeneous in their personality traits by a relatively large proportion of both men and women suggests that gender relations are governed more heavily by restrictive norms of behavior than are either class or race relations. Even though the "female" traits *emotional* and *talkative* do not generally carry negative evaluative overtones, we cannot disregard the discriminatory implications of the categorical attribution of these "expressive" traits to a group that has traditionally been restricted to the nurturing role in social life.

Our analyses have two general implications. First, people's images of social groups appear to be more sophisticated than past standard measures have allowed. By constraining respondents to express themselves in categorical terms, past standard measures have oversimplified their perceptions. These measures have thus encouraged an overriding emphasis on a type of perception that is neither necessary nor sufficient to produce invidious group images. Important examples can be found in the class and especially the race context of dominant groups engaging in self-flattery without resorting to categorical imagery. Second, there is important variance across intergroup contexts both in the frequency of categorical group images and in their implications for relations between groups. In particular, we have identified one instance—perceptions of women by both sexes—where categorical images are not only more prevalent, but where they also have serious discriminatory implications.

References

Adorno, T. W., Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford
1950 The Authoritarian Personality. New York: Harper and Row.
Allport, Gordon W.
1958 The Nature of Prejudice. New York: Doubleday.
Bayton, James A., L. B. McAlister, and J. R. Hamer
1956 "Race-class stereotypes." Journal of Negro Education 25:75–78.
Brigham, John C.
1971 "Ethnic stereotypes." Psychological Bulletin 76:15–38.
Broverman, Inge K., Susan Raymond Vogel, Donald M. Broverman, Frank E. Clarkson, and Paul S. Rosenkrantz
1972 "Sex-role stereotypes: a current appraisal." Journal of Social Issues 28:59–78.
Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes
1960 The American Voter. New York: Wiley.
Campbell, Donald T.
1967 "Stereotypes and the perception of group differences." American Psychologist 22:817–29.
Cauthen, Nelson R., Ira E. Robinson, and Herbert H. Krauss
1971 "Stereotypes: a review of the literature 1926–1968." Journal of Social Psychology 84:103–25.
Centers, Richard
1951 "An effective classroom demonstration of stereotypes." Journal of Social Psychology 34:41–46.
Deutsch, Morton, and Mary Evans Collins
1951 Interracial Housing: A Psychological Evaluation of a Social Experiment. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Ehrlich, Howard J.
1962 "Stereotyping and Negro-Jewish stereotypes." Social Forces 41:171–76.
1964 "Instrument error and the study of prejudice." Social Forces 43:197–206.
1973 The Social Psychology of Prejudice. New York: Wiley-Interscience.
Ehrlich, Howard J., and James W. Rinehart
1965 "A brief report on the methodology of stereotype research." Social Forces 43:564–75.

Eldridge, Albert F.
1979 Images of Social Conflict. New York: St. Martin's.
Fishman, Joshua A.
1956 "An examination of the process and function of racial stereotyping." Journal of Social Psychology 43:27–64.
Gilbert, G. M.
1951 "Sterotype persistence and change among college students." Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 46:245–54.
Harding, John
1968 "Stereotypes." Pp. 259–62 in David L. Sills (ed.), International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. 15. New York: Macmillan.
Harding, John, Harold Proshansky, Bernard Kutner, and Isidor Chein
1954 "Prejudice and ethnic relations." Pp. 1021–61 in Gardner Lindzey (ed.), Handbook of Social Psychology, Vol. 2. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.
1969 "Prejudice and ethnic relations." Pp. 1–76 in Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson (eds.), Handbook of Social Psychology, Vol. 5. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.
Hyman, Herbert H.
1969 "Social psychology and race relations." Pp. 3–48 in Irwin Katz and Patricia Gurin (eds.), Race and the Social Sciences. New York: Basic Books.
Jackman, Mary R.
1973 "Education and prejudice or education and response-set?" American Sociological Review 38:327–39.
1979 "The subjective meaning of social class identification in the United States." Public Opinion Quarterly 43:443–62.
Karlins, Marvin, Thomas L. Coffman, and Gary Walters
1969 "On the fading of social stereotypes: studies in three generations of college students." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 13:1–16.
Katz, Daniel, and Kenneth W. Braly
1947 "Verbal stereotypes and racial prejudice." Pp. 204–10 in T. M. Newcomb and E. L. Hartley (eds.), Readings in Social Psychology. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
Koenig, Frederick W., and Morton B. King, Jr.
1964 "Cognitive simplicity and out-group stereotyping." Social Forces 42:324–27.
Lippmann, Walter
1922 Public Opinion. New York: Harcourt, Brace.
Mackie, Marlene
1973 "Arriving at the 'truth' by definition: the case of stereotype inaccuracy." Social Problems 20:431–47.
Marx, Gary T.
1969 Protest and Prejudice: A Study of Belief in the Black Community. New York: Harper & Row.
Meenes, Max
1943 "A comparison of racial stereotypes of 1935 and 1942." Journal of Social Psychology 17:327–36.

Richter, Maurice N., Jr.
1956 "The conceptual mechanism of stereotyping." American Sociological Review 21:568–71.
Secord, Paul F.
1959 "Stereotyping and favorableness in the perception of Negro faces." Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 59:309–15.
Selznick, Gertrude J., and Stephen Steinberg
1969 The Tenacity of Prejudice: Anti-Semitism in Contemporary America. New York: Harper and Row.
Sherriffs, Alex C., and John P. McKee
1957 "Qualitative aspects of beliefs about men and women." Journal of Personality 25:451–64.
Smedley, Joseph W., and James A. Bayton
1978 "Evaluative race-class stereotypes by race and perceived class of subjects." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 36:530–35.
Tajfel, Henri
1969 "Cognitive aspects of prejudice." Journal of Social Issues 25:79–97.
1978 Differentiation Between Social Groups. London: Academic Press.
Vinacke, W. Edgar
1957 "Stereotypes as social concepts." Journal of Social Psychology 46:229–43.
Williams, Robin M., Jr.
1964 Strangers Next Door: Ethnic Relations in American Communities. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
Wilner, Daniel M., Rosabelle Price Walkley, and Stuart W. Cook
1955 Human Relations in Interracial Housing: A Study of the Contact Hypothesis. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Citizen Perceptions of Channels for Urban Service Advocacy

ELAINE B. SHARP

WHAT happens when the urban resident confronts an urban service delivery problem, whether it be unsatisfactory police performance, a pothole in the street, or some other source of dissatisfaction with service delivery? A growing body of research suggests that citizen-initiated contact is a key response, and an important form of political assertion (Eisinger, 1972; Verba and Nie, 1972; Jacob, 1972; Friedmann, 1974; Jones et al., 1977). However, we know comparatively little about the extent to which citizens have a recognized channel for such contact, and even less about their choice of one channel over another.

This paper focuses upon citizen recognition of channels for advocating change in police service. Three contrasting orientations are considered: (1) the failure to recognize any specific channel for assertion; (2) identification of a citizen organization as one's advocacy

---

Abstract Citizen recognition of channels for advocating change in police service is explored in the light of factors that might lead to recognition of a citizen organization rather than to a direct contact with a public official. Hypotheses to be tested used both individual and contextual factors that may influence whether an advocacy channel is recognized and what channel is recognized. Sense of political efficacy is used as an intervening variable. The analysis shows that the poor, the less educated, minorities, and residents of large cities are all less likely to recognize a channel for advocating police service change. The data provide limited support for a "compensatory" interpretation of the role of citizen organizations in urban service advocacy.

Elaine B. Sharp is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and Research Associate in the Center for Public Affairs, University of Kansas. The data reported here were collected by the Police Service Study, a joint project of the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis at Indiana University and the Center for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of North Carolina, with funding support from the National Science Foundation through Grant GI 43949. Analytical work was done under grant from the University of Kansas General Research Fund Allocation. The conclusions here are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the funding agency.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University

Published by Elsevier North-Holland, Inc. 0033-362X/80/0044-362/$1.75

agent; and (3) identification of some other form of advocacy contact. The data upon which this analysis is based show that very few individuals would contact the media, a lawyer, or other nongovernmental units or persons other than citizen organizations.[1] The two primary options recognized by citizens appear to be a citizen organization as a mediating agent in the contact process or direct contact with a government agency or official of some type. The purpose of this paper is to develop and test hypotheses to explain why some citizens recognize a channel for advocacy while others do not, and why some citizens recognize a citizen organization as their advocacy agent, whereas others perceive a direct contact with a public agency/official as their channel for advocacy.

Why should we be concerned with the reasons for recognition of citizen organizations as alternative channels of access to public officials for advocating urban service changes? Eisinger's (1972) analysis of actual contacting behavior suggests the importance of this issue, for he found that direct contact with public officials is a form of political assertion that is differentially exercised by different types of citizens. Blacks, for example, were much less likely than whites to make individual contact with government officials. This led Eisinger (1976: 123) to speculate that blacks and whites may pursue different channels for access to urban service decision makers—in particular, that political assertion through groups rather than individual contacts is more characteristic of blacks than whites. Verba and Nie (1972: 160–61) make similar observations about group ties as alternatives to citizen-initiated contacts with officials. Citizen organizations in this sense may serve an important compensating function in urban politics, insuring feedback from citizens who would not undertake contact on their own, or in situations which militate against individual contact with officials.

But citizen organizations will have this compensatory potential only to the extent that citizens recognize them as their go-betweens in advocacy contact situations. In order to explore the notion of citizen organizations as alternative channels of access, we need hypotheses to explain the conditions under which citizens recognize some channel for advocacy and the factors associated with the recognition of citizen organizations as one such channel. Note that the research here focuses on citizens' *recognition* of a channel for advocacy contact. It does not investigate actual or self-reported contacting behavior.

The hypotheses to be tested are based on the model presented in Figure 1. These hypotheses are elaborated more fully below. Here, it

---

[1] Ninety-five percent of the contacts named by respondents involved either a public official/agency of some type or a citizen organization or its leader.

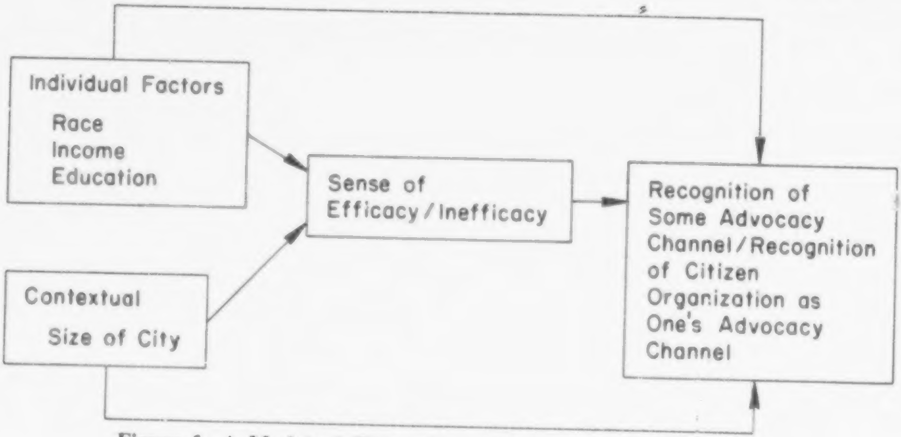
Individual Factors
Race
Income
Education
Contextual
Size of City
Sense of Efficacy / Inefficacy
Recognition of Some Advocacy Channel / Recognition of Citizen Organization as One's Advocacy Channel

Figure 1. A Model of Citizen Perception of Advocacy Channels

is most important to consider the role of political efficacy in the model. Figure 1 shows that efficacy may serve as the crucial intervening variable linking factors such as race, socioeconomic status, and city size with advocacy contact recognition. Political inefficacy is conceptualized as the belief that one's own action is unlikely to have an impact upon governmental affairs because government officials are not responsive.[2] Those who are low on efficacy are expected to be more likely to recognize no advocacy channel—a hypothesis consistent with research linking low efficacy with lower levels of traditional participation (Campbell et al., 1954, 1960; Finifter, 1970; Verba and Nie, 1972), and research indicating that those low on efficacy (or who feel powerless, in Seeman's terms) "tend to learn less of the control-relevant information available in the environment" (Seeman, 1972: 486). I also hypothesize that, to the extent that individuals do recognize an advocacy channel, citizen organizations will be more impor-

[2] My definition of inefficacy parallels that offered by Miller et al. (1979: 67). There is an extensive literature on political efficacy, and a family of closely related concepts, including powerlessness, alienation and political trust. Some of the discussion in this literature revolves around differences between those who emphasize a personal control versus luck approach to efficacy or powerlessness, as for example Rotter's (1966) internal-external control scale, and those who conceptualize efficacy in a way that emphasizes perception of government responsiveness or political trust elements. Converse (1972) and Balch (1974) both note that the Miller et al. approach to political efficacy actually corresponds to perception of institutional responsiveness. These contrasting approaches are well summarized by Balch (1974: 31), who concludes that the concept "sense of political efficacy" can be approached in one of two ways: "one ('external' or, perhaps, the separate concept of 'political trust') for the perceived responsiveness of authorities and institutions, and one ('internal') for the individual's evaluation of his own political abilities." My use of the concept of political efficacy should be viewed as corresponding to the "external efficacy" dimension. Hence, as conceptualized here, inefficacy is most synonymous with perception that government is nonresponsive, or with lack of political trust.

tant for low efficacy than for high efficacy citizens. This is somewhat more problematic, given research linking group membership with higher levels of efficacy (Neal and Seeman, 1964; Almond and Verba, 1963).[3] The rationale is that given the alternatives of direct contact with officials and use of a citizen group as a go-between, the inefficacious are more likely than the efficacious to perceive the need for an intermediary to advocate change for them.

Figure 1 also shows that in addition to individual characteristics, contextual factors may have a bearing upon recognition of an advocacy contact channel. Here, one important contextual variable, size of the city in which one lives, is explored.

Data Sources and Operational Issues

The analysis is based on data gathered during the summer of 1977. The study included three SMSA's—St. Louis, Missouri; Rochester, New York; Tampa–St. Petersburg, Florida. Twenty-four study jurisdictions were selected from these SMSA's; in each jurisdiction, one or more neighborhoods were selected for study. A total of 60 neighborhoods were included. In each neighborhood, a telephone questionnaire was administered to a household random sample of approximately 200 residents. All valid interviews that do not involve missing data on the relevant variables form the basis for the analysis.[4]

City population size is that reported in Census Bureau estimates for 1975. All other variables are derived from the citizen survey. The respondents' race, income, and education level are based upon individual questionnaire items, with income reported in $5,000 categories. The dependent variable is based on responses to the following item:

---

[3] Neal and Seeman (1964) and Seeman (1972) actually focus on "powerlessness," but define powerlessness in a way that is synonymous with political inefficacy. Note also Seeman's observation that the research linking group membership with high efficacy may be interpreted either as showing that powerlessness/inefficacy influences membership (negatively) or that membership influences powerlessness/inefficacy.

[4] The study neighborhood selection was made to insure as much variety as possible in socioeconomic characteristics and in size of the police department serving the neighborhood (size of jurisdiction). Neighborhoods were defined to match as closely as possible the boundaries of existing police beats and locally recognized neighborhoods. The respondents constitute random samples for each of the 60 neighborhoods, but the neighborhoods and jurisdictions are purposive, not random samples. While the respondents do not constitute random samples of either the metropolitan areas or the study jurisdictions, they may be considered representative of a broad array of neighborhood and jurisdictional types. While 12,017 valid interviews were completed, the total *N* shown in the tables is only 8,000–9,000 or so, because of missing data and don't know responses to one or more of the items involved. For further details on the data collection procedures, response rates, etc. see the Technical Reports published by the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, Indiana University.

> Suppose that you wanted to change the way police services are delivered to your neighborhood. Is there any person or organization that you would contact about this? Who would that be?

Individuals responding "no" to the first part of the question are categorized here as having recognized no advocacy channel; all citizens who identified a neighborhood association, civic group, or other nongovernmental, voluntary association (or leader thereof) are categorized as recognizing a citizen organization as their advocacy contact; all other contacts are categorized as public official/other. The overwhelming majority of these latter contacts are government officials or agencies.

The measure of political efficacy is the following item: "You can't get any satisfaction from talking to public officials in this community." Responses of "agree" or "strongly agree" indicate low efficacy; responses of "disagree" or "strongly disagree" indicate high efficacy. Unfortunately, a series of alternative measures of efficacy is not available in this survey, so the ideal, multiple indicator approach cannot be pursued. Hence, the findings in this regard must be treated as tentative.[5]

Race, Efficacy, and Advocacy Channels

With respect to race, the following hypotheses are tested:

Hypothesis 1(a): Blacks are less likely than whites to have recognized an advocacy contact channel.

Hypothesis 1(b): However, the citizen organization is a more commonly recognized channel for blacks than for whites.

Hypothesis 1(c): The link between race and advocacy channel recognition is the result of the mediating effect of political efficacy.

Table 1 presents data bearing on these hypotheses. It shows that blacks are less likely to have identified an advocacy contact than are whites and that members of other racial groups are still less likely to

---

[5] An item asking whether the respondent thought local officials were concerned about the neighborhood was not used as a measure of efficacy because of face validity problems, i.e., it might be interpreted by the respondent as a question of whether their neighborhood is one about which officials need to be concerned. While only a single indicator is used, it is substantially similar to those in the University of Michigan Survey Research Center political efficacy scale which bear upon "external efficacy." The item used here, for example, is comparable to SRC efficacy scale items such as, "I don't think public officials care much about what people like me think" and, "People like me don't have any say about what the government does" (Robinson et al., 1968: 460). Both of these, as well as the item used here, are designed to tap the respondents' expectancy that they can have an impact on politics, given their beliefs about the responsiveness of government.

Table 1. Contact Recognition, by Race, and by Race and Sense of Political Efficacy

	White	*Black*	*Other*
All*			
Have no contact	52%	63%	72%
Would contact citizen group	5	9	3
Would contact official/other	44	28	25
(*N*)	(6,748)	(2,597)	(148)
Low efficacy			
Have no contact	59%	68%	80%
Would contact citizen group	5	9	4
Would contact official/other	37	23	16
(*N*)	(1,541)	(801)	(50)
High efficacy			
Have no contact	45%	59%	65%
Would contact citizen group	5	10	2
Would contact official/other	50	31	33
(*N*)	(3,706)	(1,140)	(63)

* In this and all other tables, combined *N* of low and high efficacy rows is less than corresponding *N* in All row, because breakdowns for those responding "neutral" or "don't know" to the sense of political efficacy item are not presented in the tables.

have recognized some advocacy channel. Note, however, that the percentage differences between blacks and whites are not very large—Hypothesis 1(a) is supported, but not strongly. Note also that, while racial differences are somewhat more marked among high efficacy than among low efficacy respondents, Hypothesis 1(c) is *not* supported. Racial differences in the extent to which some advocacy channel is recognized remain when a control for efficacy is added.

Table 1 also provides some evidence in support of Hypothesis 1(b). While all respondents, irrespective of race, more frequently name an official or person other than a citizen group contact, the difference in proportions between these two alternatives is much greater for whites than for blacks. Furthermore, while blacks are much less likely than whites to say they would contact a public official, they are almost twice as likely as whites to say that they would turn to a citizen group.

These results are consistent with Verba and Nie's (1972: 160–61) and Eisinger's (1976: 123) speculations about the relative importance of group-based channels for assertion rather than individual advocacy among blacks, and with that literature which posits that blacks are more inclined toward voluntary association involvement than whites (Myrdal, 1944; Babchuk and Thompson, 1962; Orum, 1966).[6] The results are also consistent with observations that neighborhood organizations, spawned in inner-city neighborhoods by the citizen participation requirements of federal programs, have persisted and developed into institutionalized advocates vis à vis the city bureaucracy, especially for black residents (Kramer, 1969; Fainstein and Fainstein, 1974; Piven and Cloward, 1977: 271).[7]

---

[6] As Smith and Freedman (1972) note, these studies involve a special version of the compensatory interpretation of black participation in voluntary associations, i.e., that blacks participate more in voluntary associations to compensate for exclusion from other political and economic institutions, or because blacks, and especially lower-class

Socioeconomic Status, Efficacy, and Advocacy Channels

With respect to income and education, the following hypotheses are tested:

Hypothesis 2(a): Lower income individuals are less likely than higher income individuals to have recognized an advocacy channel.

Hypothesis 3(a): Less educated individuals are less likely than more educated individuals to have recognized an advocacy channel.

Hypothesis 2(b): However, the citizen organization is a more commonly recognized channel for lower income than for higher income individuals.

Hypothesis 3(b): The citizen organization is a more commonly recognized channel for less educated than for more educated individuals.

Hypothesis 2(c): The link between income and advocacy channel recognition is the result of the mediating effect of sense of efficacy.

Hypothesis 3(c): The link between education and advocacy channel recognition is the result of the mediating effect of perceived efficacy.

Like the hypotheses in group 1, these hypotheses are based on the literature indicating that the "underclass" is less likely to engage in traditional forms of political assertion (Verba and Nie, 1972), and the somewhat more mixed evidence with respect to lower levels of indi-

---

blacks, lack strong family ties, and need voluntary association involvement to compensate. Not all empirical research on the subject concludes that blacks are more likely than whites to participate in voluntary associations. See, for example, Wright and Hyman (1958), Hyman and Wright (1971), and Verba and Nie (1972: 151). London (1975) also finds that blacks are less likely than whites to join associations, but notes that the mixture of findings on this point may be attributed to the mixing of "sociable" organizations, or what Gordon and Babchuk (1966) call "expressive" groups, with involvement in "instrumental" groups, which better fit the conception here of the parapolitical citizen organization.

[7] Fainstein and Fainstein (1974: 44–45), for example, describe the Cooper Square Committee, which developed from its genesis as the "official neighborhood renewal organization" into an organization which "performed many of the functions of the traditional political machine—it assisted residents in dealing with the city bureaucracy in exchange for their support." Greater recognition of citizen organizations by blacks may also be a function of enhanced black solidarity resulting from recent emphasis on "black power" and similar themes (Olsen, 1970).

vidual contact with public officials among those with lower social status (Verba and Nie, 1972; Eisinger, 1972). Hypotheses 2(b) and 3(b) pursue the compensatory interpretation of the role of citizen organizations.

Tables 2 and 3 present data that substantially support Hypotheses 2(a) and 3(a); Hypotheses 2(c) and 3(c), however, are not supported by the data. Whether income or education is considered as a measure

Table 2. Contact Recognition, by Education, and by Education and Sense of Efficacy

	Level of Education (in years)			
	1–11	*12*	*13–15*	*16 or more*
All*				
Have no contact	70%	59%	45%	36%
Would contact citizen group	5	5	7	7
Would contact official/other	25	36	47	57
(*N*)	(2,688)	(3,108)	(1,932)	(1,832)
Low efficacy				
Have no contact	74%	65%	49%	47%
Would contact citizen group	5	4	9	7
Would contact official/other	20	31	41	45
(*N*)	(771)	(799)	(481)	(219)
High efficacy				
Have no contact	67%	55%	41%	29%
Would contact citizen group	4	5	7	7
Would contact official/other	29	40	52	64
(*N*)	(1,123)	(1,593)	(1,089)	(1,138)

* See note to Table 1.

Table 3. Contact Recognition, by Income, and by Income and Sense of Efficacy

	Annual Household Income					
	Under $5,000	*$5,001–10,000*	*$10,001–15,000*	*$15,001–20,000*	*$20,001–25,000*	*Over $25,000*
All*						
Have no contact	69%	61%	53%	46%	37%	35%
Would contact citizen group	5	6	6	6	6	6
Would contact official/other	26	33	40	48	57	59
(*N*)	(1,653)	(1,846)	(1,663)	(1,328)	(776)	(846)
Low efficacy						
Have no contact	72%	65%	57%	56%	41%	55%
Would contact citizen group	6	5	8	6	5	6
Would contact official/other	22	29	35	38	54	39
(*N*)	(464)	(518)	(404)	(321)	(165)	(169)
High efficacy						
Have no contact	62%	57%	50%	41%	34%	30%
Would contact citizen group	6	6	6	6	6	5
Would contact official/other	32	37	44	53	59	65
(*N*)	(668)	(890)	(885)	(779)	(512)	(561)

* See note to Table 1.

of socioeconomic status, recognition of some advocacy channel decreases dramatically with socioeconomic status. The link between socioeconomic status and advocacy channel recognition is not primarily the result of the mediating effect of political efficacy; substantial socioeconomic differences remain when a control for efficacy is added. Note, however, that efficacy is a specification variable. The relationship between socioeconomic status and contact recognition is much more marked among those with high efficacy than among those with low efficacy.

Tables 2 and 3 also show that these socioeconomic status differences in the extent to which any channel for advocacy is recognized are primarily differences in the extent to which individuals recognize a public official or other contact. Individuals of higher socioeconomic status are much more likely than those of lower status to name an advocacy channel in the official or other category; differences in recognition of a citizen group are negligible (when income is the independent variable) or slightly weighted toward greater recognition of citizen organizations among the better educated.

Citizen organizations do not, therefore, play a compensatory role for lower-status individuals generally. Their compensatory potential becomes evident only when we consider those individuals who *have* recognized some channel for advocacy. While all respondents, irrespective of socioeconomic status, more frequently name an official contact than a citizen group, the difference in proportions between these two alternatives is much greater for higher-status than for lower-status individuals. The ratio of public official to citizen organization contacts is about 5:1 for lower-status respondents, and about 7:1 or more for higher-status respondents. It is in this sense that a citizen organization is a relatively more important alternative for lower-status individuals.

With some exceptions (the highest income and the highest education categories), these socioeconomic differences are more pronounced among those low on efficacy than among those high on efficacy. Lower-status individials with a high sense of efficacy are less distinct from their higher-status counterparts than are lower-status individuals with a low sense of efficacy. The citizen organization, in other words, is relatively more salient for low than for high efficacy respondents, as well as being more salient for lower-status individuals than for higher-status individuals.

City Size, Efficacy, and Advocacy Channels

The hypotheses examined above identify classes of individuals who may be expected to be more cognizant of an advocacy channel, and those for whom the citizen organization is more likely to be a recognized option. However, situational characteristics may also have a bearing upon patterns of recognition of advocacy channels. Here we consider one important contextual variable—the size of the city in which the respondent lives.

Hypothesis 4(a): City population size is negatively associated with citizen recognition of an advocacy channel.

Hypothesis 4(b): However, the citizen organization is a more commonly recognized channel in large cities than in smaller cities.

Hypothesis 4(c): The link between city size and advocacy channel recognition is the result of the mediating effect of sense of efficacy.

Citizen recognition of some channel for advocacy is hypothesized to be less in large than in small cities because of the presumed dampening effect of their larger and more complex service systems. However, Hypothesis 4(b) posits that, while this complexity lowers the overall level of advocacy channel recognition in the large city, it may also bring citizen organizations into greater prominence. Citizens may be expected to look more frequently to citizen organizations as advocacy intermediaries when the context for direct contact with officials is more confusing or intimidating. Citizen organizations may be expected to be more salient advocacy channels in large cities for another reason as well. The literature on voluntary associations suggests that such groups "are concomitants of modernization, making their appearance in a society as it is transformed from a folk or traditional social order into an industrial, urban social system; . . . voluntary associations only become necessary as the ties of kinship, neighborhood, and religion break down" (Smith and Freedman, 1972: 15).

Obviously, residence in a small city does not make the individual a member of a folk society, but differences in city size may reflect differences in the degree of urban culture. The larger the city, the more the resident is immersed in the urbanized milieu which, according to the viewpoint above, is conducive to the proliferation of voluntary associations.

Finally, Hypothesis 4(c) posits that these phenomena (greater inability to define any advocacy channel and greater salience of citizen groups) result not so much from the complexity and confusion of the large city context and the proliferation of voluntary associations there, but rather from diminished political efficacy, engendered by the larger, more distant bureaucracy of the big city.

Table 4 presents data bearing on these hypotheses. As with previous hypothesis sets, we find substantial support for the (a) and (b) hypotheses, but less for (c). Residents of large cities are less likely than those of smaller cities to have recognized some advocacy chan-

Table 4. Contact Recognition by Size of City, and by Size of City and Sense of Efficacy

	Size of City		
	Large (N = 4) (Over 200,000 pop.)	*Medium (N = 7) (25,000–80,000)*	*Small (N = 10) (Under 20,000)*
All			
Have no contact	64%	48%	48%
Would contact citizen group	8	5	3
Would contact official/other	28	47	49
(*N*)	(3,806)	(2,295)	(2,026)
Low efficacy			
Have no contact	66%	60%	58%
Would contact citizen group	8	4	4
Would contact official/other	26	36	38
(*N*)	(1,116)	(502)	(431)
High efficacy			
Have no contact	60%	39%	41%
Would contact citizen group	9	5	3
Would contact official/other	31	55	57
(*N*)	(1,728)	(1,282)	(1,140)

NOTE: Respondents from neighborhoods in any of the urban counties studied (i.e., not living in an incorporated jurisdiction) are not included.

nel; but these differences appear both among those low in efficacy and among those high in efficacy. Sense of efficacy does act as a specification variable, however. Differences in advocacy channel recognition by city size are much more substantial among those high in efficacy than among those low in efficacy. For those low in efficacy, even the medium-sized city context shows as great a dampening effect on recognition of advocacy channels as does the large city context for the highly efficacious. In sum, a sense of inefficacy, when coupled with residence in a larger city, is particularly conducive to failure to recognize any advocacy channel.

Note also that Hypothesis 4(b) is strongly supported. Even in these distributions based upon all respondents—distributions greatly affected by the substantial numbers of large-city respondents who have recognized no advocacy channel—we find that large-city residents are more likely than residents of smaller cities to name a citizen organization as their advocacy channel. This relationship holds irrespective of sense of efficacy.

The greater salience of citizen organizations in large cities is even clearer if we compare citizen organizations named and other advocacy channels named. The ratio of public official and other contacts to citizen organizations is 15:1 in small cities and 10:1 in medium-sized cities, compared to only 3.5:1 in large cities. These differences remain when a control for efficacy is added; the only substantial difference between the low efficacy and the high efficacy respondents' named contacts is in the small-city category. The data suggest that residence in a small city, when coupled with a high sense of efficacy, is particularly conducive to recognition of a direct contact with a public official as one's mode of advocacy. This finding bears directly upon that "public choice" literature which argues that decentralization in metropolitan organization, and multiple, smaller jurisdictions generally, permit the citizen's preferences to be more directly communicated (Bish and Ostrom, 1973: 24; Rich, 1978). Table 4 shows that small-city residents *are* more likely than large-city residents to identify some direct contact with a public official as a suitable channel for advocacy; but the data also show that recognition of this advocacy channel by small-city residents is much more characteristic of those with a high sense of efficacy than of those with low efficacy.

Finally, Table 4 suggests a particular interpretation of the greater salience of citizen organizations in large cities. Since recognition of citizen organizations in large cities is about the same irrespective of sense of efficacy (at least as measured here), there is little support for the notion that the relative importance of citizen organizations in large cities is the result of a more prevalent sense of inefficacy in the big-city context. To the extent that this interpretation is not supported, it becomes more important to consider the "proliferation" interpretation—i.e., the view that the large city is more congenial to the development of a dense and varied network of voluntary associations, and that these provide greater opportunities for advocacy intermediary roles to develop and become recognized by citizens.

Summary and Conclusions

The analysis shows that the poor, the less educated, minorities, and residents of large cities are all less likely to recognize a channel for advocating police service change.[8] These individuals may therefore be in a comparatively poor position to exercise the "voice option" (Hirschman, 1970). While the findings with respect to the role of political efficacy should be considered more tentative, it appears that the links between lower income, less education, minority status, and large-city residence, on the one hand, and failure to recognize some advocacy channel, on the other, are *not* due to a more prevalent sense of inefficacy among these types of residents. The efficacy variable does, however, serve to specify the conditions under which racial, socioeconomic, and city size differences are more and less marked.

---

[8] Interrelationships among these independent variables have also been considered, although this analysis is not presented in the text. For example, because blacks are more heavily represented in large cities, we may be interested in whether the relationship between race and advocacy channel recognition may be accounted for by the city size variable, or vice versa. Analysis of the data shows that each of these variables has an independent effect. In each city size category, blacks are more likely than whites to have no advocacy contact, and are more likely than whites to identify a citizen organization; similarly, for both blacks and whites, city size is negatively related to recognition of some advocacy channel, but positively associated with recognition of a citizen organization.

The analysis provides some support for a compensatory interpretation of the role of citizen organizations, but only if we carefully circumscribe the meaning of the compensatory role. When we consider the full set of respondents, the tradeoff is largely between having no contact and recognizing a public official as one's contact. It is in these categories that socioeconomic, racial, and city size differences are most evident. The existence of the citizen organization option does not alter this basic pattern. Rather, the special importance of citizen organizations for the "underclass" is evident in the distribution of recognized contacts. "Underclass" residents *who specify an advocacy contact* are much more likely than their "advantaged" counterparts to name a citizen organization. Citizen organizations are not therefore more important for underclass residents as a whole; rather, the citizen organization option is more salient against the backdrop of the smaller number of underclass citizens who recognize any advocacy channel at all. Citizen organizations play a compensatory role in the sense that, were this option to be removed, the impact would be comparatively greater for those poor, or less well-educated, or blacks who have managed to define some channel for political assertion.

The "compensatory" interpretation is less relevant with respect to understanding the greater importance of citizen organizations in large cities. While there is evidence that citizen organizations are more commonly perceived as advocacy intermediaries in large than in small cities, this phenomenon does not appear to result from a more pervasive sense of inefficacy engendered by the big-city context. The greater salience of citizen organizations as advocacy channels in large cities may instead be the result of proliferation of such groups in large cities, and therefore an enhanced opportunity for group-based assertion.

Recent attention to citizen-initiated contact as a form of political assertion contributes to our understanding of political participation and the politics of urban service delivery. Interpretation of this form of participation requires attention to differences in citizen beliefs about how they might effect such contact. Further research is needed to determine whether the patterns found here hold with respect to urban service issues other than policing. Further research is also needed to determine whether the character of citizen organizations available to the citizen, or the accessibility, power, or responsiveness of local officials, have any bearing on the extent to which citizens identify one or the other as their advocacy channel.

References

Almond, Gabriel, and Sidney Verba
1963 The Civic Culture. Boston: Little, Brown.
Babchuk, Nicholas, and Ralph Thompson
1962 "The voluntary associations of negros." American Sociological Review 27: 647–54.
Balch, George
1974 "Multiple indicators in survey research: the concept 'sense of political efficacy.'" Political Methodology 1: 1–44.
Bish, Robert, and Vincent Ostrom
1973 Understanding Urban Government. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute.
Campbell, Angus, Gerald Gurin, and Warren Miller
1954 The Voter Decides. Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson.
1960 The American Voter. New York: Wiley.
Converse, Philip
1972 "Change in the American electorate," in Angus Campbell and Philip Converse (eds.), The Human Meaning of Social Change. New York: Russel Sage.
Eisinger, Peter
1972 "The pattern of citizen contacts with urban officials," in Harlan Hahn (ed.), People and Politics in Urban Society. Beverly Hills: Sage.
Fainstein, Norman, and Susan Fainstein
1974 Urban Political Movements: The Search for Power by Minority Groups in American Cities. Beverly Hills: Sage.
Finifter, Ada
1970 "Dimensions of political alienation." American Political Science Review 64: 389–410.
Friedmann, Karl
1974 Complaining: Comparative Aspects of Complaint Behavior and Attitudes Toward Complaining in Canada and Britain. Beverly Hills: Sage.
Gordon, C. Wayne, and Nicholas Babchuk
1966 "A typology of voluntary associations," in W. Glaser and D. Sills (eds.), The Government of Associations. Totowa, N.J.: Bedminster Press.
Hirschman, Albert
1970 Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations and States. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Hyman, Herbert, and Charles Wright
1971 "Trends in voluntary association memberships of American adults: replication based on secondary analysis of national sample surveys." American Sociological Review 36: 191–206.
Jacob, Herbert
1972 "Contact with government agencies: a preliminary analysis of the

distribution of government services." Midwest Journal of Political Science 16: 123–46.

Jones, Brian, Saadia Greenberg, Clifford Kaufman, and Joseph Drew
1977 "Bureaucratic response to citizen-initiated contacts: environmental enforcement in Detroit." American Political Science Rev 71: 148–65.

Kramer, Ralph
1969 Participation of the Poor. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

London, Bruce
1975 "Racial differences in social and political participation: it's not simply a matter of black and white." Social Science Quarterly 56: 274–86.

Miller, Arthur, Edie Goldenberg, and Lutz Erbring
1979 "Type-set politics: impact of newspapers on public confidence." American Political Science Review 73: 67–84.

Myrdal, Gunnar, with the assistance of R. Sterner and A. Rose
1944 An American Dilemma. New York: Harper.

Neal, Arthur, and Melvin Seeman
1964 "Organizations and powerlessness: a test of the mediation hypothesis." American Sociological Review 29: 216–26.

Olsen, Marvin
1970 "Social and political participation of blacks." American Sociological Review 35: 682–96.

Orum, Anthony
1966 "A reappraisal of the social and political participation of negroes." American Journal of Sociology 72: 32–46.

Piven, Frances, and Richard Cloward
1977 Poor People's Movements. New York: Pantheon.

Rich, Richard
1978 "Equity and institutional design in urban service delivery," in R. Lineberry (ed.), The Politics and Economics of Urban Services. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Robinson, John, Jerrold Rusk, and Kendra Head
1969 Measures of Political Attitudes. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research.

Rotter, Julian
1966 "Generalized expectancies for internal vs. external control of reinforcements." Psychological Monographs 80: 1–28.

Seeman, Melvin
1972 "Alienation and engagement," in A. Campbell and P. Converse (eds.), The Human Meaning of Social Change. New York: Russell Sage.

Smith, Constance, and Anne Freedman
1972 Voluntary Associations: Perspectives on the Literature. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Verba, Sidney, and Norman Nie
1972 Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equity. New York: Harper and Row.

Wright, Charles, and Herbert Hyman
1958 "Voluntary association memberships of American adults: evidence from national sample surveys." American Sociological Review 23: 284–94.

Nonresponse in Mail Surveys: Access Failure or Respondent Resistance

CAROL P. SOSDIAN AND LAURE M. SHARP

CONCERN has been voiced increasingly in the past few years that respondent unwillingness to participate in surveys has become a serious threat to the validity of information collected through survey methods (American Statistical Association, 1974). Survey researchers have assumed that burdensome survey instruments, respondent skepticism about the usefulness of research, and the issues of informed consent, invasion of privacy, and confidentiality have been major factors in the assumed increase in respondent resistance (Bailar and Lanphier, 1978; Sinaiko and Broedling, 1976). To date, there is little evidence to support these beliefs (Marquis, 1977). The limited but systematic data collected thus far do not support the contention that informed consent and confidentiality issues play a major role in increasing nonresponse (Singer, 1978; Goldfield et al., 1978). But despite the lack of empirical evidence, strongly held beliefs about respondent resistance guide the research strategies of survey organizations and survey sponsors.[1]

If respondent resistance is indeed as widespread and serious a phenomenon as has been suggested, mail surveys—as well as surveys

[1] In particular, the federal government's Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which has the responsibility for clearing questionnaires and interview instruments used by federal agencies and their contractors, views reduction of respondent burden as one of its chief missions in the clearance process.

Carol P. Sosdian is Senior Researcher, Westat Inc., Rockville, Maryland. Laure M. Sharp is Assistant Director, Bureau of Social Science Research. This article is a revised and shortened version of a paper presented at the 34th Annual AAPOR Conference, Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania, May 1979.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University
Published by Elsevier North-Holland, Inc.
0033-362X/80/0044-396/$1.75

based on personal interviews—should be affected. But here, too, the relationship between respondent resistance and response rates has apparently not been studied (Kanuk and Berenson, 1975). Heberlein and Baumgartner (1978) have suggested that variations in mail response rates can be largely attributed to the number of contacts and the salience of the survey topic to the respondent.[2] But, in addition, we have long suspected that the biggest problem in mail surveys is inability to establish clearcut categories of reached and unreached respondents. The researcher knows only the number of questionnaires sent out and the number returned, either by the designated respondent, or by the postal service as never delivered. On this basis, nonresponse is calculated. But in fact, the researcher does not know the number of questionnaires that reached the eyes of the intended respondent, and gave him the opportunity to decide whether or not to respond. For example, mail may be incorrectly delivered, misplaced, or thrown away before the respondent has an opportunity to make his response decision. Thus, without an accurate estimate of access to intended respondents of a survey, it is difficult to estimate the amount of intentional nonresponse experienced.

The problem of mail survey access to respondents became of special interest during a recent Bureau of Social Science Research study that looked into some aspects of the usefulness of external degree programs (EDP's) for adults. Between May and July, 1977, BSSR conducted a mail survey of a select group of college degree recipients, men and women who had received an associate or baccalaureate degree from a sample of institutions offering external degree programs. A total of 3,499 persons were included in the original survey sample.[3]

Because of a relatively low response rate and evidence of poor handling of questionnaires by the postal service, we decided to address the resistance vs. access issue more comprehensively in an intensive telephone survey of nonrespondents designed primarily to investigate the problem of nonresponse bias.

The final response rate for the mail survey was 56 percent, and the final completion rate was 42 percent (Table 1). In designing our

---

[2] Accurate determination of the amount and direction of change in response rates has been further complicated by past inconsistency within the profession with respect to the calculation and reporting of "response rates." Recently, it has become standard to report "response rate" as the proportion of *eligible* potential respondents from whom a completed data set is obtained. "Completion rate" is now generally considered the proportion of *all* potential respondents from whom a completed data set is obtained. For discussion of these definitions and their role in standardizing the reporting of survey research results, see Kviz (1977), and Bailar and Lanphier (1978).

[3] The findings are reported in three monographs by Sosdian and Sharp (1978).

Table 1. Survey of External Degree Recipients: Response Status After Three Mailings

	(N)	Percent
Respondents (completed questionnaire returned)	(1,486)	42
Ineligibles (deceased, no degree received, etc.)	(22)	1
Undelivereds (all questionnaires returned by post office)	(830)	24
Nonrespondents (never heard from)	(1,161)	33
Total Sample	(3,499)	100
Response rate: 1,486/2,647 = 56% (Respondents/Eligibles)		
Completion rate: 1,486/3,499 = 42% (Respondents/Total Sample)		

sample for the telephone survey, we attempted to clarify three issues: (1) the reliability of the postal delivery service, (2) a more accurate assignment of nonparticipants to "nonrespondent" and "undelivered" categories, and (3) reasons why nonrespondents had not responded to the mail survey.

Because of time and resource constraints, we sampled about one-third of the 2,000 cases eligible and available for the follow-up ($N=631$); of these, 252 were "nonrespondents" and 279 were "undelivereds."

Telephone Tracking and Evidence of Misclassified Cases

The first procedure in the follow-up was to find telephone numbers for each of the 631 cases (Table 2).[4] Although we used several

Table 2. Survey of Nonrespondents: NRQ Sample Telephone Listings and Availability of Listing Information by Type of Case

	Type of Case (Classified Prior to NRQ Survey)					
	Nonrespondent		*"Undelivereds"*		*Total*	
Availability of Telephone Listings	*(N)*	*%*	*(N)*	*%*	*(N)*	*%*
Open listing	(194)		(83)		(277)	
Closed listing	(27)		(10)		(37)	
Subtotal of listings	(221)[a]	63	(93)[b]	34	(314)	50
No listing	(131)	37	(186)	66	(317)	50
Total NRQ sample	(352)	100	(279)	100	(631)	100

[a] Of the 221, 146 (66%) were listed at the same address as in our records.

[b] Of the 93, 22 (24%) were listed at the same address as in our records.

---

[4] We assumed that, given the age, education, and income of this population of graduates, the number of persons without telephones would be negligible.

sources, telephone company operators provided us with information which was most helpful in examining the final mail survey classification of our nonrespondent questionnaire (NRQ) cases. It turned out that 37 percent of the nonrespondents did not have a local telephone listing. Of course, it does not necessarily follow that they no longer lived at the designated address or in the community, but it is reasonable to assume that at least some of them did not receive our questionnaire. Conversely, telephone listings were in fact found for 33 percent of the "undelivereds" in the NRQ sample—most often at another address in the same community. These data suggested that there had been slippage in delivery, and failure to return undelivered materials despite the use of first-class postage.

At the end of the telephone tracking, we had obtained a listing for 277 of the 631 in the NRQ sample (44 percent).[5]

The NRQ Interviews and Reasons for Nonresponse

The 277 telephone listings yielded contacts with 187 correctly identified graduates. Of these, the large majority (80 percent) agreed to be interviewed ($N = 150$).[6]

The first question we asked these 150 persons sought to establish respondent access, i.e., receipt of our questionnaire. Of those in the "nonrespondent" group who agreed to be interviewed ($N = 122$), over one-quarter (28 percent) claimed that they had never received the questionnaire. Thus, our analysis was limited to only 83 self-described nonrespondents, i.e., persons who stated that they had received the questionnaire, but according to our records, had failed to return it. When our interviewers asked each of these questionnaire recipients to give the most important reason why he or she had not returned the form, 10 persons (12 percent of the group) claimed that the questionnaire had been completed and mailed. As for the others, lack of motivation, rather than overt resistance, characterized the responses (Table 3). Nearly three out of five indicated lack of time or interest; a few thought they had received the questionnaire "by mistake." Only one interviewee touched upon the issue of burden, in the remark that the (16-page) instrument had seemed too long. No interviewee mentioned concerns about confidentiality, invasion of privacy, or the "usefulness" of research.

---

[5] In order to maximize chances of locating and interviewing an NRQ respondent, we accepted many listings for individuals with the same name as our respondent, but at a different address.

[6] Nearly equal proportions of "real nonrespondents" and "undelivereds" agreed to be interviewed.

Table 3. Reasons Given for Nonresponse

Question 1: "Can you tell me the most important reason you decided not to fill it (the questionnaire) out?" [a]

Coded Response	*(N)*	*Percent*
Questionnaire was completed and mailed	(10)	12
Never got around to it	(17)	20
Too busy	(14)	17
Forgot it or lost it	(11)	13
Questionnaire was completed but not mailed	(8)	10
Questionnaire came at a "bad time" in respondent's personal schedule	(6)	7
Thought questionnaire received "by mistake": thought it did not apply to him/her	(5)	6
Questionnaire seemed "too long"	(1)	1
Other reasons	(7)	8
Did not answer	(4)	5
Total	(83)	99[b]

[a] Asked of 83 interviewees who reported having received the instrument.
[b] Does not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

Discussion

Returning to our original query concerning the relative impacts of respondent access vs. respondent resistance upon our mail survey experience, we find that the data from the NRQ follow-up suggested that access rather than resistance may well have been a major factor. But obviously, our findings are suggestive, rather than conclusive. Clearly, there is some slippage in post-office handling; we had evidence of this even prior to the telephone survey of nonrespondents. We will never know if those respondents who did not have a telephone listing but whose questionnaires were not returned by the post office did actually receive a questionnaire, but we suspect that some proportion did not. Similarly, it is likely that some nonrespondents simply claimed that they never received the questionnaire to save face in the telephone interview situation, but it is unlikely that every one of them lied. What is clearly needed is some systematic research to document access to respondents with mail questionnaires. Given the high volume of "junk" mail (some of it sent first class), it is not unlikely that many persons discard certain types of mail without ever opening it, or that family members prescreen mail, discarding low interest items before the addressee ever sees them. There may be other interventions—at the post office, in apartment houses, and in private homes—which impede delivery of mail to designated respondents and which should be systematically studied.

Insofar as our telephone survey yielded information about attitudes of "nonrespondents"—that portion of the sample which had the opportunity to respond, but chose not to do so—there was no indication from the overt responses that respondent felt hostile or cautious about being survey participants. Rather, like many interviewed in past follow-up surveys, they had assigned low priority to participating. If hostility and suspicion were as widespread as held by some survey researchers and sponsors, we would have expected more of our NRQ interviewees to volunteer complaints about burden or invasion of privacy, despite acquiescence and politeness pressures in the telephone interview situation. Possibly, the truly hostile group were the refusers, who constituted 20 percent of the reached nonrespondents. This proportion is slightly higher than in an earlier BSSR survey of college graduates which included a survey of nonrespondents (Sharp).[7] But for this group, too, we lack sufficient data to make a definite assessment.

We suspect that in recent years, survey professionals have been too eager to accept and internalize the notion of growing resistance to surveys on the basis of less than systematic evidence. Clearly, more careful research is needed to examine actual nonresponse—i.e., refusals—vs. the technical issue of respondent access. It may well be that attention to this problem would be more useful than emphasis on reducing respondent burden in maintaining high standards of reliability in survey research.

References

American Statistical Association
1974 "Report on the ASA conference on surveys of human populations." The American Statistician 28:30–34.
Bailar, B. H., and C. M. Lanphier
1978 Development of Survey Methods to Assess Survey Practices. Washington, D.C.: American Statistical Association.
Goldfield, E. D., A. G. Turner, C. D. Cowan, and J. D. Scott
1978 "Privacy and confidentiality as factors in survey response." Public Data Use 6:3–16.
Heberlein, T. A., and R. Baumgartner
1978 "Factors affecting response rates to mailed questionnaires." American Sociological Review 43:447–62.
Kanuk, L., and C. Berenson
1975 "Mail surveys and response rates: a literature review." Journal of Marketing Research 12:440–53.

---

[7] In the 1960 survey, 10 percent of nonrespondents refused to be interviewed. On both occasions, reasons for refusals were not probed.

Kviz, F. J.
1977 "Toward a standard definition of response rate." Public Opinion Quarterly 41:265–67.
Marquis, K. H.
1977 "Survey response rates: some trends, causes and correlates." Background paper. Santa Monica, California: The Rand Corporation.
Sharp, L. M.
1963 "Two years after the college degree: work and further study patterns." Washington, D.C.: National Science Foundation, NSF 63–26.
Sinaiko, H. W., and L. A. Broedling
1976 Perspectives on Attitude Assessment: Surveys and Their Alternatives. Champaign, Illinois: Pendleton Publications.
Singer, E.
1978 "Informed consent: consequences for response rate and response quality in social surveys." American Sociological Review 43:144–62.
Sosdian, C. P.
1978 External Degrees: Program and Student Characteristics. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education.
Sosdian, C. P., and L. M. Sharp
1978a The External Degree as a Credential: Graduates' Experiences in Employment and Further Study. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education.
1978b The External Degree as a Credential: Notes on Methodology. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Social Science Research.

The Ambiguities of "Religious Preference" in Survey Research—A Methodological Note

WADE CLARK ROOF

A QUESTION about religious preference is commonly asked in opinion polls and sample surveys. Typically the question is phrased: "What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion?" Often this is the only item on religion included, combined with a follow-up on specific denominational preferences. Typically the question is used as a means of ascertaining a respondent's religion. That is, a person's religious *preference* is taken as the basis for determining a person's religious *affiliation*—and by implication sometimes, one's religious background, current religious practice, and faith.

That some ambiguity and error are introduced in measuring religious affiliation this way has not gone unnoticed. McCourt and Taylor (1976) found in a special study, where those of Catholic preference were reinterviewed, 45 respondents (5 percent of the sample) claimed they were *actually not* Catholic. From this they concluded that the inconsistency was not due to coding or interviewer error, but represented a discrepancy of some importance in religious measurement. Suggested were some plausible explanations for the variation in response. For example, respondents in a "questionable" marital status vis-à-vis church teachings or those with spouses of a different faith, might be led to state preferences not in keeping with actual membership. Religious preference and religious belonging are simply not always the same, especially in a pluralist society in which denominational switching is fairly common and meaning and belonging are only loosely integrated.

Exactly how much discrepancy there is between religious *preference* and religious *membership* is unknown. Well over 90 percent of

---

Wade Clark Roof is Professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Public Opinion Quarterly © 1980 by The Trustees of Columbia University
Published by Elsevier North-Holland, Inc.
0033-362X/80/0044-403/$1.75

Americans indicate a religious preference in polls and surveys. Actual membership in churches is assumed to be less, although just how much less and/or how belonging varies in relation to preferences are matters about which there is speculation but little empirical knowledge.

Fortunately the recent Gallup survey of "Unchurched Americans" included questions on both religious preference and church membership, thus making it possible to examine the preference-belonging issue in greater depth than previously possible. The "Unchurched" survey was conducted by the Gallup Organization, Inc. in conjunction with a coalition of church bodies in April 1978. It consisted of a national probability sampling of the adult civilian population in the continental United States, 18 years of age and older, with 1,523 interviews.

A cross-tabulation of preferences and memberships is shown in Table 1. Sixty-six percent of those indicating a Protestant preference are Protestant church members; 69.5 percent of the Catholics are members.[1] The extent of Protestant-Catholic inconsistency is small, less than 1 percent for Protestant-preference respondents and slightly more than 2 percent for Catholic-preference respondents. Four percent of the Protestants "don't know" if they are members, compared to about 7 percent of Catholics.

Lack of overlap between preference and membership is more evident when Protestants are grouped by denominations. Data for the major Protestant bodies are shown in Table 2. Almost three-fourths (73 percent) of the Protestants of these major faiths are church members, of one denomination or another. But the discrepancy between

Table 1. Religious Preferences and Memberships

Preferences	*N*	%
Protestant (887)		
Members		
Protestant	585	66.0
Catholic	7	0.7
Don't know	32	3.6
Nonmembers	263	29.7
Catholic (449)		
Members		
Catholic	312	69.5
Protestant	11	2.4
Don't know	30	6.7
Nonmembers	96	21.4

---

[1] Not unexpectedly, the proportion of church members expressing a preference for the same religion is much larger: [illegible]5 percent of those claiming membership in the Catholic Church express a preference for Catholicism, and 98 percent of those claiming membership in a Protestant Church report a preference for Protestantism.

Table 2. Preferences and Memberships for Major Protestant Bodies

Preferences	*N*	*% Nonmembers*	*% Members* *Same Denomination*	 *Other Denomination*
United Methodist	103	19.4	68.9	11.7
Southern Baptist	100	21.0	68.0	11.0
Lutheran	97	35.1	51.5	13.4
Presbyterian	74	33.8	56.8	9.4
United Church of Christ	46	23.9	52.1	24.0
Episcopalians	41	31.7	51.2	17.1
American Baptist	37	30.6	54.1	15.3

preference and denominational affiliation is quite considerable. Among those expressing a liberal Protestant preference, i.e., the Congregationalists and Episcopalians, 24 and 17 percent, respectively, report membership in other religious groups. Both of these liberal denominations enjoy high status among Protestants, which perhaps accounts for their greater preference on the part of some who actually belong to other denominations. In the case of conservative religious preferences the discrepancy is smaller, but not less than 10 percent on the average. Even in these larger, mainline constituencies, no less than one out of 10 belongs to a church different from that indicated as a preference.

Given the extent of these differences, the question arises: Who are the persons for whom there is a discrepancy between religious preference and church membership? Several hypotheses come to mind concerning marital status and spouse's religiosity. One hypothesis is that married respondents are likely to be less discrepant in preference and belonging than the nonmarried (i.e., single, separated, divorced, widowed), and another is that married respondents with spouses of the same faith are less discrepant than those with spouses of another faith. Both hypotheses were supported. Sixty-five percent of nonmarried Protestants belong to a congregation of the faith, compared to 73 percent of those married; for Catholics the respective figures are 75 percent and 80 percent. Differences were greater in the case of religiously mixed marriages. Seventy-four percent of Protestants and 73 percent of Catholics having spouses of the same faith are members of congregations consistent with their preferences, compared to 40 percent of Protestants and 57 percent of Catholics in religiously mixed marriages.

Aside from marital status and spouse's religiosity, other factors thought to be important for predicting the preference-versus-membership discrepancy were gender, age, years of education, local community reference, "new morality" values, and extent of childhood religious socialization. An index of localism was constructed using three items: length of residence in the local community, number of closest friends within the local community, and involvement in voluntary organizations in the local community (alpha = .52). A "new morality" index was created with four items: acceptance of sexual freedom, acceptance of marijuana usage, approval of legal abortions, and approval of extramarital sexual relations (alpha = .63). Childhood religious socialization was measured by how often the respondent attended church or Sunday school when in grade school.

The effects of these correlates were examined by means of regression analysis. Regressing discrepancy between preference and membership as the dependent variable on the correlates, we obtain the results shown in Table 3.

The strongest predictors of discrepancy for both Protestants and Catholics are religiously mixed marriages, local community reference, and new morality values. Notably less important are such structural factors as gender, marital status, age, and education. Hence persons most likely to indicate a religious preference yet *not* to belong to a congregation of the same faith are those who, regardless of gender, age, or education, are married with spouses of another faith, or who adhere to nonconventional values, or who participate very little in local community activities. The discrepancy is most apparent for individuals whose values, beliefs, and outlook put them at odds with their spouses or with others in the mainstream culture.

Though statistically significant for both groups, religious exogamy

Table 3. Correlates of Preference-Membership Discrepancy

	Standardized Regression Coefficients	
	Protestants	*Catholics*
Marital status (married = 0; single, separated, divorced, widowed = 1)	.05	.03
Religiously mixed marriage (spouses of same faith = 0, mixed faith = 1)	.17*	.12*
Gender (male = 1, female = 0)	.09	.03
Age	−.05	−.03
Years of education	−.09	−.02
Childhood religious socialization	−.08	−.14*
Local community reference	−.11*	−.18*
New morality values	.10	.18*

* Statistically significant at .01 level.

appears to be less important for Catholics than for Protestants.[2] For Catholics, new morality values and local community reference are stronger as correlates of the preference vs. membership discrepancy than mixed marriage. Childhood religious socialization works against the discrepancy, more so for Catholics than for Protestants.

Overall, it appears that discrepancies between preference and membership are most likely for persons experiencing cross-pressures of one kind or another, as in the case of religiously mixed marriages, and for persons with nonconventional outlook and values, not highly integrated into local community institutions and activities. For both, the religious discrepancy is probably a manifestation of a broader normative discrepancy, and not simply an isolated or strictly religious phenomenon. Future researchers would be well advised to recognize that ambiguities of this kind exist and to proceed with caution in drawing extended inferences from one about the other.

Reference

McCourt, Kathleen, and D. Garth Taylor
1976 "Determining religious affiliation through survey research: a methodological note." Public Opinion Quarterly 40:124–27.

---

[2] The coefficients shown in the text are based on aggregate Protestant and Catholic groupings. For example, a Methodist married to a Baptist is treated as a "same faith" Protestant marriage, in order to make Protestant and Catholic comparisons meaningful. Even so, the exogamy factor is stronger for Protestants. Using Protestant denominational categories as basis for calculating mixed marriages, the coefficient would be still higher.